



HETTY  
GEYBERT



GEORG  
HERMANN





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BY

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TRANSLATED BY

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To  
MY WIFE





## PREFACE

I CRAVE permission of my readers to tell a tale here, simply for the sake of telling it and for no other reason. I will tell and tell until I lose myself therein as a silk-worm hides herself in the golden thread she spins. Look upon it as a whim of mine, a toy put together, piece by piece, Heaven alone knows why. Call it what you will but—listen ! For if I do not tell this tale, there will be no one to tell it to you and it might be lost as though it had never been—and that would be a pity. For those who took part in its happenings will breathe no word of them ; not one syllable will you ever hear from their lips, for they have grown a little silent, since they withdrew, tens of years ago, from this life's hurly-burly, to await in the peace and quiet of meditation the coming of that day when chain and measuring rod shall mark roads and streets through their present dwelling-place—a lonely island amidst the noisy waves of city life—and where their modest ivy-covered mounds, round which the children play in the afternoon sunshine, shall give place to heaps of granite slabs and stones for the busy highway with its pavements and gutters. For the life of all of whom I tell is but legend now. Nay, more, it has passed into nothing ; their place, as the psalmist says, knoweth them no more.

And, therefore, let me speak of them, for it is injustice, crying injustice, that anything that has once

been should sink into such absolute nothingness, that a bare fifty or sixty years after our life in this doubtful place, when we have withdrawn from life's scene, not a living soul should breathe our story, not a wind of heaven whisper it. Is it for this we live, for this we pass our days in joy and grief, for this alone we wear those chains so inextricably interwoven of the iron rings and golden links of happiness and sorrow? Is no one to know what we have borne? Why should no word bear testimony to our life, why should not we who are still here catch the last echo of men and things, why not once more roll the stone up the toilsome mountain-side ere it is lost for ever in the depths of the dark ravine?

If your footsteps should ever stray into this corner of Berlin, what would you picture to yourself as you study those letters with their curls and flourishes, long since bereft of the last trace of former guilt, and decipher that "our dear niece, Henrietta Jacoby, née Geybert, entered this life on May 7, 1812, and fell asleep October 3, 1840"? What more than that she was not thirty years old, and that, maybe, something had gone amiss with the marriage, since she is remembered as niece and not as wife? And what does the stone immediately opposite tell you with its inscription, setting forth that "the honoured and respected merchant, Solomon Geybert, an example of brotherly love, was born on May 3, 1775, in Berlin, and died there on September 10, 1850"? What more than that the man was seventy-five years old and a kinsman, perhaps, of this Henrietta Geybert? If you study the stone beside him, you will think that the wife, Frederica Geybert, adorned with many virtues, doubtless for long years trod life's path by his side and, if

you wander farther through this resting-place, you will perhaps conclude that Jason Geybert, who found his modest bed five rows farther back, and Ferdinand Geybert, whose old, gouty bones rest beneath an utterly neglected mound, also belong to this same human story. But more than this you will certainly not gather from them.

Now I know more of them and will tell it to you. You do not see why you, who have enough to do with your own sorrows, should trouble yourselves with the affairs of others, and those, moreover, past and gone half a century ago ! But of that I take no heed. In this I am like the careful housewife who can never love and will not suffer waste in her domain ; for, be it bread or human life, it is and ever remains—God's own gift.

GEORG HERMANN.





# HETTY GEYBERT

I SUPPOSE there is barely anyone left who can remember how Hetty Geybert, at that time, went down König Street. The wind was sweeping clouds of dust before it from the Alexander Platz, for it was the first real fine, blue day of that spring. Little white clouds floated across the sky between the small figures on the roof of the King's Colonnades—those stone figures, so full of life and movement.

In New Friedrich Street the trees behind the garden walls were turning red and brown, the poplars were hanging out their catkins and the elms stood bedecked with blossoms to the very tips of all their tiniest twigs, whilst the lilac bushes, drooping over the fence, even showed fat green buds whose sharp points were ready to burst in the morrow's sunshine. Round the tower of the parish church the jackdaws were flying in hot haste, hither and thither, up and down, like black butterflies mad with love, and down the whole length of Kloster Street stood the hooded carts from the Goose Market, like great brown mushrooms in the sun's white glare.

But the narrow houses, with their gaily painted fronts, simple plaster figures and ruddy roofs like red hats, lay in the sunlight with their cellar arches and the stone benches beside them, with their many bright little window-panes framed in white and provided with reflecting mirrors on every storey—there they stood like two rows of grenadiers, lined up and presenting arms to greet Beauty's coming.

Between them, along the uneven cobble-stones, some as big as a child's head, that paved the roadway with

its deep bridged gutters on either side, separating it from the footpath,—along these cobble-stones the coaches, many old and dusty, many bright and clean, but all alike heavily laden, passed, amidst cheers, on their way into the wide world.

And not only coaches, but heavy wagons, drawn by equally heavy horses, with jingling brasses hanging from their plaited manes, rolled out of the town.

But in the New Friedrich Street an old ragman, with horn spectacles on his nose, was standing in front of his cart, examining the linen rags the children brought him, dignified and serious amidst the hubbub and insistent chattering of the high little voices. Here and there, too, the fields of red and blue hyacinths in the white china pots of the florists' shops had encroached so far on to the pavement that passers-by had to balance themselves along the kerb on the very edge of the gutter.

No, I suppose there is barely anyone left who can remember how on this April day of 1839 Hetty Geybert walked along König Street. But people in those days stopped . . . and a lawyer's clerk, coming from the Town Court, looked and looked after her and then, under the pseudonym "Eginhard," wrote a sonnet to "the gracious vision that passed by," a sonnet which, when printed in the next number of the *Fashionable World*, gave rise to the strangest surmises. A linen mercer of Fischer Street answered it at once, also in sonnet form, bewailing—quite without cause though—the youth's fair soul overshadowed by the madness of a guilty passion.

What a pretty girl she was ! How she tripped along in her little broad-buckled shoes, with her silver-grey garments like some fair evening in spring ! Her three rows of flounces shimmered in a rustling dance, whilst her wide shoe-ribbons actually fluttered in the breeze—wide silken ribbons of rosebuds on a silver ground—and the long fringes of the Indian shawl draped over her broad shoulders and drawn down between the wide leg-of-mutton sleeves, quivered at every step she took.



Her gloves were pale blue and she was carrying a fish-net, a sunshade with a jointed handle and a reticule adorned with a lyre stitched in black beads.

Like all the Geyberts, she held herself firmly erect and went her way, looking neither to right nor left, with a wonderful touch of pride both in walk and bearing, as she rustled along in her silver-grey taffeta, like a five-master under full sail. She knew that people stopped to look after her . . . but it was her due. Everything about her was touched with proud beauty—her tall stature, her long but not thin face, with the high white forehead and heavy eyelids and the firmly closed mouth, above which lay, like a faint shadow, a delicate touch of down. Her hair was carefully arranged under her large, shady hat on each side of temples and cheeks in three rolls, black and shining—like a dark wood frame round an English water-colour. Strength, vitality and a touch of melancholy were mingled in that face with its Southern colouring.

Those eyes, too, dark, almond-shaped, with their blue whites, were what had made all the Geybert men, from the grandfather down, into rakes and women-hunters. They bore testimony to qualities, did these dark eyes, as puzzling as any riddle and never to be found out, because the beauty, whose handmaid they were, was all unconscious of such qualities and might possibly not even possess them. Such a bearing and face brought with them something tragic, for they aroused man's curiosity and then must needs cause disappointment, for such charm, such grace and health, a soul with such tender bloom can only belong to those whom we kiss in our dreams by night.

Hetty was no longer very young, looked older, more developed and mature than she really was. But she was beautiful. Oh how beautiful Hetty Geybert was!

But people turned to look, not only at her, but also at an old, very old, man, with a beardless, shrivelled face, who was standing, like a remnant of bygone years, at the corner of the Steinweg. No one went past him, either, without looking more closely at him and turning

round to look once more and see if he had not a pigtail hidden away under his coat collar. A couple of little girls in short plaid skirts with broad white starched lace on their pantalettes even stopped for a time to stare at him openly, as at some veritable sea monster. No, he did not own a pigtail, but on his powdered, stiff short wig, nearly twice as broad above as below, he wore a top hat of rough brown felt with a curved brim such as people wore at the time when the French were in the land. He had, too, high yellow top-boots and a long, very long, frock-coat with gilt buttons. On his double-breasted waistcoat dangled heavy trinkets, signet rings and little silver carriages and horses, and the flashing scarf-pin in his folded stock was a great striped cornelian.

There the old man stood, his legs somewhat apart and leaning with both hands on his gold-headed cane as he studied with unswerving attention two post-horses trotting past and looked after them with his nutcracker face, his mouth wide open and his eyes protruding. Hetty caught sight of him in the distance, laughed and waved the fish-net, but he had eyes for nothing but the horses, which he studied with the gravity of a connoisseur.

“ Good morning, Uncle Eli ! ”

“ Well, Hetty, well, well, where are you off to, my child ? ”

“ To the market, Uncle, to buy a fish.”

“ A pike ? ”

“ Yes, Uncle.”

“ For this evening ? ”

“ Yes, Uncle.”

“ And what’s the price of pike just now ? ”

“ Not less than fifteen groschen.”

“ Not less than fifteen groschen ! In my young days, Hetty ”—his speech was very slow and precise, as though he rolled the words over his tongue and chewed them as he spoke—“ in my young days we did not pay five groschen—not for a fish like that ; you know, here by the arch where it is written up, ‘ Peter once



abode with a fisherman ; therefore blessing rests upon this house.' ”

“ Tell me, Uncle Eli, what is Aunt Minna doing? ”

Uncle Eli slowly lifted one hand from his walking-stick, and looked at her seriously as he laid his fingers on her shoulder.

“ My daughter, I ask you what is this life of ours? Now, what is it? My only treasure up there.” Uncle's stick pointed down the Hohenstein Road away to the distant Marien Church.

“ But, for Heaven's sake, what is wrong with her, Uncle? ”

“ She is not even sure if she can go to Solomon's to-night.”

“ But what is the matter? ” Hetty asked in relief, for she had really thought it was a case for the undertaker.

“ Just think, now just think, Baumbach had actually to come three times yesterday to cup her, such a state she was in. On Thursday she brought home a fowl from the Gendarme Market. Four hours it boiled. We couldn't get a knife into it. I said : ‘ Minnie, don't eat it. ’ But your aunt did eat some.”

“ Do you think, Uncle Eli, this evening she will——”

“ My Minnie is like that. She drinks a cup of chocolate, that pretty little cup of hers, you know, when Baumbach is cupping her, as if it were a mere nothing.”

“ Is Aunt, then, better now? ”

“ I am not sure, but I think so. For she wanted to show Minna the door to-day.”

“ Oh, well, then she is nearly herself again.”

“ Come a step or two with me, my child. I am just going down to the coach office. To-day the Prenzlau coach was driving two new East Prussian horses. Nagler knows me by now. He asked, so I hear, who I was, because I always look at his team. No doubt he thinks I'm a democrat. Hetty ”—he stopped short—“ I tell you, I can't understand men nowadays. They are all too queer for me. But with horses—there I know

where I am, every bit as well as his lordship Coach-master Nagler. You may take that as true of your old uncle. Do you hear the chimes from the parish church? 'Keep—faith—ev-er.' " Uncle Eli pulled up suddenly and took off his brown top hat with a flourish that raised a cloud of powder from his short, cropped wig.

"Bon jour, Mr. Under-Commissioner, bon jour with all my heart." The constable nodded and went calmly on.

"He knows me," Uncle Eli said with pride. "What are you laughing at? If you were a sensible lass, Hetty, you wouldn't laugh at your old uncle. Nowadays, I tell you, nowadays, one has to be good friends with any rogue of a night-watchman, for who knows how he is connected with the Chief Justice."

Again Eli stopped short.

"Look here, Hetty, doesn't your Uncle Jason come along like a lame sea monster? And what sort of Latin beggar has he picked up again? Wherever does he get them all from?"

Uncle Jason sure enough! The only uncle Hetty really loved; the youngest, a bachelor, rather the "enfant terrible" of the family; to speak plainly, somewhat of a rake, but one with tact and culture. He had limped a little ever since they put a shot right through his left hip at Grossbeeren, where he was express rider for Bülow, whose service he had entered as secretary earlier in his youth, when he still sang Arndt's and Körner's songs. Now he sang Béranger's. He limped a little, it is true, but was certainly not in any other way the least like a lame sea monster. Tall and slim, thin indeed, well-preserved for forty-eight, a trifle grey, with clear-cut features and clean shaven, except for narrow side-whiskers from ear to chin. He wore a straight-brimmed top hat, a bottle-green coat, tightly fitting and full-skirted, long, with a double row of buttons, and the collar so broad and high that it hid half the back of his head. With the coat he wore quite light narrow trousers with straps, after the very



latest fashion ; above the red silk waistcoat appeared the ample folds of a black neckerchief, broad and full, fastened by a pin representing a golden lyre with silver strings. And Jason had drawn his chin in soldierly fashion firmly down inside the upstanding points of his high, stiffly starched collar.

He came across the road a little en grand seigneur, carefully avoiding the puddles, as he beckoned to a tall, fair man who was following him in awkward shyness. He was no dandy like Jason, but a little carelessly dressed in blue coat, yellow waistcoat and a soft, slouch-hat.

Jason stood before the two, stiff as a ramrod, with a merry twinkle in his eye. It was plain enough that he was a born tease. "Bon jour, ma chère amie, bon jour, ma bien aimée," he said, with a bow to Hetty. Then he turned to Uncle Eli.

"Well, you old nutcracker. This just suits you, doesn't it? Rather different from your old nags, to go out walking with such a pretty girl ! But I'll tell Aunt Minna. Yes, I'll tell her this evening."

"Now, Jason"—Uncle Eli shook his head thoughtfully—"why do that, when you know how queer she has grown lately? She is always imagining all kinds of tales about me, and yet, Heaven knows, I am really a steady man !"

"That's what he says now"—and Jason winked at Hetty. "But I knew him in earlier days !" Meantime his companion still stood a few steps away, uncertain whether to wait or to go on.

"Now, Kossling, come along. 'Sans gêne et sans souci.' Dr. Friedrich Kossling—Herr Elias Geybert, now head of Geybert's, my father's brother ; every Wednesday afternoon he has played cribbage with old Fritz."

Uncle Eli again raised his brown hat and a cloud of powder with it, then drew out a small enamel watch, quite small, with an engraved silver dial, and held it close up to his eyes. "If I don't go, they'll drive off," he said, and went without further leave-taking.

"Good-bye, Uncle, then, till this evening," Hetty called after him. But he did not turn his head. Jason looked straight in front of him.

"At seventy-nine we shan't be like that. I tell you, they'll be throwing my bones to bring down the apples from the trees."

"Seventy-nine! He could tell many a tale, couldn't he, Demoiselle?"

"Well, no, Kossling, he has had no adventures; he is just an old ostler. Quadrupeds have always been more to him than bipeds, a taste I can well understand. According to Hegel, man is a creature endowed with reason, but I share his predilection for horses. But, Kossling, do you already know my niece, Hetty Geybert? See, here you have three generations of us side by side, the old nutcracker, me and her . . . Dr. Friedrich Kossling. Hetty, I gave you a little while ago his tale in *The Companion*.

Hetty curtsied. "Of course I know you! Do you not write for the *Fashionable World* as well?"

"Now and then, Demoiselle."

"But don't let us take root here! Hetty, where are you going?"

"I have to buy something more for this evening."

"We will come with you."

"But perhaps that will inconvenience Demoiselle Hetty."

"Why should it? I am going to the market!"

"May I carry the fish-net, Demoiselle?"

Hetty looked at him with a smile, and the tall, fair man blushed like a schoolboy.

"That is, if it is allowed. Why do you laugh at me, Demoiselle?"

"Not at you, at all. But that waistcoat is one of our make, H.M.B. 17."

"Are these waistcoats made at your father's works?"

Hetty looked serious and bit her lip without answering, whilst Kossling, when he saw that he had touched a sore spot, gave an embarrassed pull to his neckerchief.

"Ah, no, Kossling," put in Jason, as he limped at



his side. And there was none of his usual irony now in his quiet, friendly tone. "It is my brother Solomon who manufactures the waistcoats. Hetty's father has long since put on immortality. It was a pity; I would gladly have done it for him, for I had nothing to lose, but he stayed over there at once whilst I came home again. He was the best of the four of us; that you can see, too, in the girl. But, Kossling, tell me: is it not always like that? The rubbish survives. Börne dies but the Pücklers and Menzels live, grow and flourish." His wrath grew as he spoke. "Without a thought we staked our lives for a matter not worth twopence—no, not even a brass farthing. And we did not really need to do it. My poor brother paid dearly enough for his part; and this"—he took Hetty's hand—"and a silhouette is all I have left of him. But this is most like him."

For a while they walked on silently, side by side, each lost in his own thoughts.

"Kossling, do you know, I have twice in my life acted very stupidly, first in 1813—we were all much better off before then, I can assure you; ever since, the world has rolled backwards—and then in 1825, when I persuaded myself I had not enough to live on. Well, it didn't last long: opening the cloth business and winding it up was, so to speak, all one. And since then, money actually has run short now and then. I tell you my eldest brother, Solomon, is the only human being I really envy. He eats, drinks, sleeps, plays whist, l'hombre and patience with his wife, manufactures waistcoats—H.M.B. 17—and neckerchiefs, exports shawls, keeps his books in Italian, Spanish, modern Greek, double and triple entry, and the only things that can excite him are a remittance from Sommerfeld or English bills of exchange at a long date instead of a short.

"You live with your uncle, Demoiselle Hetty?"

"Yes. As long as I can remember . . . they brought me up."

"So they are really like father and mother to you?"



Jason answered for her.

"Well, no, Kossling, we can't say that exactly. My sister-in-law only loves one person in the whole world and that is herself, pure and simple. And my brother, with the passing years, has grown into nothing but double and triple entry."

"Now, Uncle Jason, you know that isn't true."

"Well, *comme vous voudrez*, ma belle Henriette ! But I tell you, Kossling, you know how it is. One comes into a great assembly of people, a tea, a party, a family, and scents out a relative, a brother, a sister, a kind heart under the masks. That is how it has been with us two . . . but, in spite of that, my niece has neither father nor mother."

"We will turn down Spandau Street here," said Hetty ; "in the Whey Market there is a woman who sells very cheaply."

"Now, Doctor, I expect you are thinking you will be late at Drucker's? "

Kossling started. For he had been utterly lost in his contemplation of Hetty Geybert as of a beautiful picture and had forgotten all else. As his eyes stroked her hair, and gently caressed the soft skin of her temples, he had actually felt the physical contact, the sense of touch in his finger-tips until he was almost shocked at himself.

"Were we going to Drucker's? I would rather look at a few papers at Steheli's ; we never know any news nowadays."

"We can do the one and not leave the other undone. But first the fish has to be bought, and you shall see, Doctor, how well I can manage witches."

A little, ragged child, a pale, bare-footed twelve-year-old girl, accosted Kossling :

"Oh, my lord, do buy a bunch of violets for your young lady. I'm that hungry, not one farthing have I earned to-day."

Hetty laughed. Kossling's cheeks flamed as he laid his hand on the pale little dirty creature's head.

"Well, child, what's the price? "

"Only a ha'penny the bunch."

"Tell us, then, how do you know that it is the lord's young lady?" said Jason in amusement.

The child, quick to see that perhaps the ha'penny might in this case turn out a whole penny, answered without hesitation :

"Well, anyone can see that. Such a beautiful young lady ; and how he keeps on looking at her, sort of sideways, does his lordship."

Jason shook with laughter, whilst Hetty, somewhat annoyed, fingered the tips of her pale blue gloves and Kossling turned red as a lobster. He gave the penny to the child and, with a deep bow, handed the sweet purple flowers to Hetty. Jason took two bunches as well, and gave one to Hetty as he kissed her hand.

"You see, Kossling, I have an uncle's privileges."

The other bunch Jason twisted in his fingers as he walked on singing :

"Of violets blue the wreath she wore,  
When first to dance I asked her ;  
My Nancy love whom I adore,  
Then in my arms I clasped her."

He knew for whom it was meant, too. He ~~was~~ never at a loss to know that, even if it was not always the same Nancy.

"Demoiselle Hetty, have you ever seen the beds of hyacinths in the Frucht Street? What they will be, when they are a little more out, say in a week or a fortnight—then you must go ! There is a high platform, and from it you look over a sea of colour, over a great sweet-scented palette. Of course we have plenty of green and flowers, too, in Berlin, in the cellars and markets, but that is really Dutch, tropical."

"Every year at this season we say we will go, but Aunt has not found time yet ; besides, she dislikes driving in a cab for fear she might be tipped out."

"I wouldn't venture either, in her place. Just fancy, Demoiselle, if they unyoked your horses, as they are



doing for Taglioni now in Vienna." The words slipped out, though he was half-terrified at his own boldness.

"Doctor, Doctor," scolded Jason, "don't make this little girl more conceited than she is. Doesn't she prance along already like a three-year-old before a landaulette?"

"No, no, they won't unyoke the horses for me, no fear of that!"

"Perhaps, Herr Geybert, you will go to look at the hyacinths this year, and you must show them to your niece."

"Doctor, Doctor!" Jason said again, as he put up his eyeglasses and fixed his glance on the tall, fair, awkward man.

"Oh yes, Uncle, you will take me," Hetty begged.

"To hobble beside you as treasure-keeper! Hetty, I tell you, I'll have to speak seriously to your aunt to-day."

"Oh well, of course, if you think it wouldn't do . . ."

"Of course I'll take you sometime, Hetty," her uncle answered, "in a fine coach, too, with an out-rider." Then, changing the subject:

"Doctor, you mentioned Taglioni just now. Did you ever see in Berlin, Sonntag, that little golden singer. What are Taglioni and her hop dances, what Fanny Elsler, in comparison with her? I tell you that, even with my poor lame legs, I once yoked myself before her carriage here in the Alexander Platz. Those are bygone days, Doctor. . . . Berlin then could still boast of a theatre."

They had reached the Whey Market, and Jason clapped Kossling's shoulder as he pointed to the prison, remarking:

"We two will join Uncle Dambach up there some day yet."

"There's my friend," cried Hetty, as she went up to a colossal market woman sitting in a shelter, a cross between a shop and a wooden box, which she entirely filled. Beside her stood a fish-tub filled with rippling,

splashing, churning fish—little char, large-scaled, slippery carp, tench and perch, and amongst them long, narrow green pike as motionless as statues. What a giant this woman was ; with bare arms like a slaughter-man, a flowered, yellow, cotton gown, a big straw hat and under it a face as big as a pancake and pock-marked as if it had been pressed in a muffin iron.

“ Now, what did you want then, my Fräulein? Fine pike ; the big ones fifteen groschen to-day,” she sang in a shrill monotone.

Jason had dashed his hand into the fish-tub, caught a pike by the tail and swung the glistening fish this way and that, scattering water drops on every side.

“ Now, my woman, what price the stickleback? ” he asked innocently.

But there he found his match ; for the fish woman, as soon as she had recovered from her first surprise, stuck her arms well akimbo and began to rate him.

“ What, you’re for making a fool of me, you cripple-legged rascal, with your stiff starchery up your blown-out calf chops ! You’d best not let me lay my hands on you.”

“ But, my good woman, we want to buy the pike ! ”

“ Buy it, then. But my pike are not to be grabbed by the tail. How would you like it yourself? ”

Jason gave in, for he saw if he didn’t there would be something said not very fitting for refined ears. Meantime Hetty was bargaining for an enormous fellow with a pointed head, a regular brigand amongst pike, and offering twelve and a half groschen for him instead of fifteen. They came to terms for thirteen and a half, after the woman had assured her that, rather than sell him to such customers for twelve and a half, she would salt him and take him home.

Kossling had the fish put into the net, where it flapped and gasped amongst the entangling meshes, and no power on earth, he said, would induce him to let Demoiselle Hetty carry such a load.

Hetty begged for her net, but in vain ; though they killed him he would not hear of it.



Jason told him it was certainly less fitting for him to carry the fish-net than for his niece. But Kossling remained firm and said if people thought he was a serving-man, it would only give him pleasure to be able to pass as her servant. Then Jason tried to insist that at least he should take hold of the handle as well, but Kossling would not hear of that either.

"Well, then, Doctor, if you help me to carry the fish home, you must help us, too, to eat it."

"Yes, Kossling. You must come with me this evening to my brother's. Share toil, share spoil."

Then the big, awkward doctor, a very child in social matters, grew shy and frightened. No, he had never thought of such a thing, he couldn't possibly accept the invitation; and besides, he didn't know if the uncle would like it. In any case, they couldn't ask him to another man's table.

Oh yes, he could, Jason answered, for he had a ten per cent. share in his brother's manufactory and therefore a proprietary right over one tenth of the fish, and therefore he was always allowed to bring one guest. Of course he must not eat more than one piece of fish, if he did not wish to diminish his—Uncle Jason's—income.

Hetty, much amused at Kossling's embarrassment, assured him he need not take that too seriously or feel afraid; she would give him half her slice as well.

"If you will give me half your slice, yes, I'll come," Kossling answered, and glanced down his legs to see if he was really the same man as before.

His homage in no way displeased Hetty, for one glance had shown her that this man, with his awkward manner, was, in comparison with all her other flatterers, like a clean white sheet beside thick records of crime.

"Well, then, you will come to my brother's to-day, Doctor, and I will call for you. You will meet people there of a new type for you, not always pleasant, but with their good side, however. And why not? We can't all have literary gifts."

As they strolled up Spandau Street again, Uncle Jason had here and there to limp behind the other two, since there was no room for three to walk abreast on the rough, narrow strip of pavement, but not without raging and arguing that it was really Kossling who ought to walk behind, as the lady was his—Jason's—niece and no connection of Kossling's. But he only got as answer that, since he had had the privilege for so many years of treading life's road beside her, he surely couldn't grudge Kossling some share in that privilege; in fact, in accordance with Prussian common law, he proclaimed equal rights in nieces for all.

When they had once more reached the corner of König Street, Hetty said: "Well, now I must cross; we live over there."

"The pike, though, shall not leave my hands before I know for certain that it is to go into the pot. Besides, I must see the house to be able to find it again. Berlin is so poor in things worth seeing. . . . So this is where you live—nice, very nice; a poet's dwelling by rights, with its laurel wreaths under the windows. I wonder how long the house has been built; forty years perhaps. Where is your window?"

"Don't trouble about a serenade. Hetty sleeps to the back," teased Jason.

"You must excuse me. I am quite beside myself to-day. Everyone is happy in his own way, and I am always like this when I meet with a thing of beauty."

"Happy or beside yourself?" Jason innocently inquired.

"Both, friend of my heart, darling of the Brandenburg Muses."

For a long time they stood at the broad double door, said good-bye five times at least, but could not part, until there appeared above them at the window in the first storey a big, full, white cap and a voice cried a long, slow "Het—ty, Het - - - ty."

Jason waved his hat as he declaimed:



“ At every glance he gave them  
They shook with mortal fright ;  
And trembled at each gesture,  
As 'twere some dreadful sight. ”

“ Do you know, Kossling, who sings that? Our friend, our friend Dr. Ludwig Liber, alias Ludwig Lesser. We could have loved you more, Lesser, if you had not written.”

“ Good-bye, Doctor, you will come this evening? ”

“ No, no, I only accepted in fun.”

“ Don't worry, Hetty, I'll bring him with me.”

“ Yes. I'll tell Aunt at once that you will honour us.”

“ Het—ty, Het - - - ty,” came once more the long, shrill tones.

“ Well, till we meet ! ” She had taken off her glove and stretched out her hand to her two escorters ; a narrow hand it was, but plump, with dimples along the knuckles, and fingers, rosy and round, as though turned on a lathe.

Kossling, as he handed over the net, clasped Hetty's hand a little longer than was quite necessary, then grew frightened and with flaming cheeks and with great ceremony drew off his slouch-hat in a deep, awkward bow.

Jason, humming and whistling, took his arm whilst Hetty hurried into the doorway, with its well-scoured, sanded boards ; on either side two white semicircular plaques of finely moulded, decorative plaster bas-reliefs were let into the wall. One represented Cupid and Psyche and the other Bacchus educating the young God of Love. For years Hetty had never looked at them, but to-day she passed through very slowly, cast a half-stolen glance at them and greeted each as an old acquaintance with a smile.

On the right there was a door leading straight into the shop, where the book-keepers, with goose quills behind their ears, stood balancing themselves before their high desks like horses at their cribs.



Hetty looked through the centre pane, surrounded with its border of small red, yellow and green glass fragments. Her uncle had just lately had this pane put in; before, it had been a white varnished wooden door adorned with all kinds of carving and ornamentation, but uncle had replaced the centre panels with bright glass, which he thought had a much more refined look about it.

The entrance was very dark, and the steps steep, uneven and hollowed out by many feet. In front of the windows, with the full white curtains, there were balconies that took from the stair even the little light the curtains might have permitted. But Hetty knew the way and, in spite of the dark, found the embroidered bell-rope which bore in fine flowing beadwork letters the name of S. Geybert. She, indeed, was the only person who had ever read these words, for had she not stitched them bead upon bead?—and here, where the bell-rope hung, nothing less than raised type for the blind could possibly have been read. The bell tinkled on and on, as though it could not leave off, without always one more little chuckle.

Aunt Rika opened the door, shuffling along in bedroom slippers, the full cap on her head, and clad in a voluminous, flounced gown of grey and white striped silk. She had got it cheaply, for she had taken an old piece, to be got rid of as a job lot, from the warehouse, and fixed a day for the dressmaker, who, with a thousand tucks, flounces and pleats, had made a covering for her capacious form which was a kind of compromise between a ball dress and a morning wrapper.

Aunt Rika was very short and thick-set, covered, too, with very considerable layers of fat. Yet her face was pretty with an almost childlike prettiness, although showing, too, childish limitations and narrowness of outlook. She had black eyes, like two currants in a big scone.

“Hetty, where have you been so long?” she asked indignantly. “Your uncle will be coming up directly

and you must look after the roast veal. The girl doesn't know how to."

Hetty stepped into the entrance hall, lighted by glass doors on two sides. Its walls were whitewashed, and a couple of old, curved-back chairs, originally in her grandfather's best room, now found here a last resting-place for their faded covers and chipped gilt frames.

"First I met Uncle Eli. Did you know that Aunt Minnie was not well? They had to send for Baumbach, but she will put in an appearance this evening, for she won't miss that."

"Of course she has been eating something again that didn't agree with her?"

"Yes, Uncle thought so too;—and then I met Uncle Jason."

"What about him?"

"He sends you his love, and he is going to bring a friend with him to-night—a Dr. Kossling."

"I don't understand that—and I'll tell Jason so too. How long have I kept an inn here?"

"But, Aunt, he has often brought someone with him before, and this is really a nice man."

"Oh well, it's all one to me. All the same, he might sometimes return the compliment." And Aunt Rika took the fish-net and poked the pike, which was now only showing very faint signs of any conscious connection with this world.

"What did it cost?"

"Thirteen and a half, Aunt."

"I should have got it cheaper. Well, if a fool is sent to market, rogues rejoice," was her tart reply.

Hetty was not one of those who can answer speeches like this. A lump came in her throat so that she could not speak and her eyes filled with tears.

"Did you, at least, change my book at Fernbach's?"

Hetty took out of her reticule a small shabby volume in marble covers.

"*Ivanhoe*? I never saw such dull books as Fernbach has nowadays. Can't you bring me something of



Siede's or Rambach's. I always liked those. Or something new of Sue's! But no, always Scott and Dickens again, and Dickens and Scott, and Sternberg and Schopenhauer."

"Well, next time I'll ask for one of Siede's."

"Now, Hetty, go into the kitchen and look after the dinner," said her aunt, as she shuffled along with her book in her fat hand to the "best room."

Hetty went to her bedroom, which opened directly from the hall, a quiet little room where the light entered through the tiny panes of a window that opened on to a balcony leading to the courtyard; just now it was full of the aromatic scent of peppermint from two balsam plants on the window-sill in pots of white and gilt-patterned porcelain.

In one corner stood the bed under a chintz canopy gay with crimson flowers; figured white gauze curtains covered the window, and in front of a leather sofa with a curved back and long rows of white buttons stood a light birch table, small and oblong, on high spindle legs. On its figured rep cloth lay Hetty's album, a little brown volume stamped with a flaming heart on a gold altar of love; close by was a goldfish bowl with a bronzed china stand, against which a rococo shepherdess reclined in love's sadness.

And the fat, red goldfish swimming lazily round and round the bowl showed behind his curved glass wall now swollen, now again slim, as he turned and from time to time stared with dull, bolting eyes at the little, oblong leather book and the sentimental shepherdess. Two white chairs with curved backs kept silent guard against the wall to right and left of a mahogany cabinet displaying marvels of every kind behind its bright glass doors.

Hetty tied on a big apron and went along the outside balcony past the branches of the old walnut-tree that spread its arms to every side of the narrow courtyard and almost touched Hetty with its hanging clusters of dark blossoms and big sticky aromatic leaf buds.



The new maid was standing quite at a loss in the kitchen, and it was Hetty who turned the meat, basted it, and mended the fire, so that when the uncle came the joint was cooked and ready.

Uncle Solomon's house garb was a long coat, covered with intricate systems of patches, and always a little cap of black velvet embroidered with a garland of oak leaves in cross-stitch. If he ever forgot it, he always the very next day had a cold that at once spread through the whole house.

Solomon was not unlike Jason, only older, quite grey already, besides being somewhat bloated as well; the same features that, in Jason, were clean-cut, refined and intellectual, had by the passage of time been blunted and coarsened in him. The decades of petty office life, the bickering and fret of his married life, no less than its stupid monotony as year after year passed in the same grooves with nothing to distinguish one day from another—all this had worn him out and made him a little suspicious. Although in earlier days he was not without his full share of the Geyberts' well-known drastic wit, now all he had to show for it was a couple of phrases and a number of witticisms, not to be repeated in all society; he had, too, in his repertoire a few little jokes that were not exactly refined; for example, his trick of holding an outstretched finger against a friend's averted face and his unrestrained merriment when his friend turned at his call and so got a poke in the cheek. This particular trick never failed to annoy and infuriate Aunt Rika, but, for all that, he did not give it up, the one indulgence he still allowed himself. In everything else, yes, in everything, he had long since been accustomed to give way to his wife, but in this one thing he did consider he had his own sealed and vested rights.

At the stroke of one, Uncle Solomon had taken his place at the round mahogany table in his high chair with its curved back. He had tied his dinner napkin round his neck and carefully fastened it down with

three pins to his old coat. There he sat without a word, only beating time with the prongs of his fork against his napkin as a vent for his impatience, for his life was lived so up to time, that the neighbours used to set their clocks by him.

The room was large, painted in blue and white with a broad silver scroll round the cornice. A long row of dark oak chairs with carved high backs stood stiffly along the wall. On the sideboard, in shape like a high, brown, polished chest, glistened red cut glasses that cast little points of light on to the ceiling and a comical reflection in a polished reading lamp, just the kind to give a distorted image. They encircled, too, both the china candlesticks, stiff Doric pillars surmounted by thick, yellow tallow candles, each attended by its silver snuffers. Under the sofa, with its blue damask cover, there were ranged, even now in April, whole rows of bottled fruit. A head-rest, with a blue parrot in clipped woolwork, hung over one end of the sofa and a second, worked with beautiful flowing script, on the other. On the footstool a little white silk dog with shining bead eyes was to be seen in the same kind of work, whilst the cushions, thick and soft, that covered the window-seats, showed cross-stitch garlands of roses, red at Uncle's window, virgin white at Aunt's. Head-rests, footstool, cushions were all Hetty's creations. In the window, hung on little chains pictures of white biscuit porcelain, that, seen against the light, showed beautiful groups of figures. Uncle had only lately bought them. They were "Evening Prayer" and "Morning Greeting," and Uncle thought "The Negro's Bath" and "The Warrior and His Son" were also equally appropriate contrasts.

Uncle Solomon was still sitting there in lonely impatience, now pricking the table-cover with his fork, when Aunt Rika came in, most indignant that dinner was not yet ready—but Hetty had come back so late. And, at last, Hetty came too with a scorched face and streaming eyes—the fire had



smoked—and in her wake tripped the new maid with the tray.

Then there the three sat together once more—Uncle and Aunt had grown old in these rooms—at this round table ; Hetty, too, would very soon have eaten her dinner with them for a quarter of a century at this same table. When she first entered the house they had to put a cushion on her chair to bring her nose above the edge of the table ; now she no longer required a cushion.

Of course she could have been married long since if she had not come of such a good family. It is true her father had left nothing, had frittered everything away, but all the same, they must see she married into a good family. And they could really often have done so, if Uncle Solomon had not kept a tight hold on his money, and if both of them had not found it cheaper and more convenient to have Hetty to help her aunt in the house. Naturally she would later on, in any case, have enough and to spare, so surely they need not part with it now ; and she would find a husband, too. If it should be absolutely necessary, then they would look for one for her, but, for the time being, things were quite right as they were. And Hetty was pretty enough, too, to get ten men for every one of her fingers.

Uncle was depressed, for a report, on good authority, had reached him that the King was not well. It was not that this news was a shock to his patriotic feelings, but he said to himself that, if anything happened to the King now, just now . . . and even a king—he did not himself like mentioning the end of this life ; indeed, he had to swallow hard at the mere thought of it—“ But even a king,” he said to himself, “ is not exempt from such accidents, just as even a Privy Councillor may die.” . . . Well, if this happened, he—Solomon Geybert & Co.—would certainly be left with half his stock of coloured waistcoats on his hands . . . not to mention the lengths now coming in that would next year be out of fashion. And he



turned the matter well over as to whether it would not be advisable to cover himself a little, at any rate, by increasing his stock of black goods, both plain and figured.

In Aunt's opinion things were not so bad as that with the King. He would live some years yet, she was sure, and thank Heaven, she did not want any other. For she had a sort of confused feeling that, either by birth or marriage, she was related to the Prussian Royal Family, because a Prussian Prince had once at a town ball danced with her in the days when she was still young, pretty and not quite so far round. Her husband was not exactly proud of this incident, which she had presented to him in a somewhat peculiar light, as though the iron resistance of her innate modesty alone had prevented her beauty from proving the ruin of her virtue. But he said to himself—and he had had ample opportunities in the course of thirty years to justify the statement—that in his wife's little brain things of this world were reflected not quite as they actually were, and that events were remembered not just as they happened. So, no doubt, just as she mixed up the dead and the living and said things of people that were not strictly facts, so in this case her fertile imagination might again have played her false.

Hetty said that Uncle's news ought to be reckoned with, but he shouldn't take any steps at present. If things came to their worst, he could always sell his goods abroad. And even general mourning would scarcely mean no sale at all for coloured waistcoats. Jason, who generally heard everything, had, that morning, known nothing of the King's illness.

At the mention of Jason's name Aunt Rika overflowed like a pent-up mill stream, and her flood of words, restrained for a few moments, poured out in full force once more.

She indulged in digressions concerning Jason's manner of life and his conduct as regarded morality, and added that, as if that was not enough, he must

needs bring to her dinner that evening one of his boon companions. Why he should, passed her understanding, she added, with a long side-glance at Hetty.

But Solomon did not rise to her bait; he loved Jason, for he had a secret feeling that in his brother much had matured and ripened that in himself had dwindled into nothing. Besides, he knew only too well that his wife, for thirty years now, had waged war against everything that bore the name of Geybert, because it was higher, of finer feeling and healthier than the petty, narrow spite that adorned the members of her own family. In spite, however, of their diverse natures, the tie of habit had bound this ill-matched pair of human beings closely together, and they asked for nothing better than to tread life's way, side by side. The storms raised by their differences of opinion did not reach the depths of the matrimonial haven—indeed, barely ruffled its surface—and Uncle might just have growled “Noodle” at his wife, yet, directly after, the two would be sitting peacefully again, side by side, on the sofa taking a little nap, either with their two heads close together or both in their respective corners with their faces pressed against the head-rests, so that for the next half-hour Uncle bore on his cheek in Braille the parrot's head and Aunt the reflected writing of “Sweet” as they looked out of the windows, leaning against their cushions begarlanded with roses purple-red and virgin-white—until these marks of peaceful slumber slowly faded away to blossom forth again on the following day.

In earlier days they had looked out of one window quite comfortably side by side, but physiological reasons had of late made this impossible, and so they each had their own.

No less to-day did events follow their usual course. In the excitement of the subsequent heated discussion about Jason, Uncle Solomon likened Aunt Rika to a turkey-hen—in which he was not so far wrong when the total weight of her body was compared with the size of her brain—and called all Aunt Rika's tribe a



deceitful "generation of vipers." As emphasis of this last word an old soup-plate of English ware, with a dark blue pattern of all kinds of marvellous birds, had split in two in his hands—but it had long been cracked. Yet, in spite of this, the two, Solomon and Rika, again sat side by side on the sofa, gently breathing in and out through their nostrils, far removed from earthly strife and toil. And after a long hour they were both looking out into the beautiful afternoon sunshine from their respective windows, and calling out comments to each other on the passers-by, whether acquaintances or strangers.

Uncle Solomon showed great skill in guessing everyone's calling. He had acquired this in the course of the long years that he had observed the street at the same time every afternoon—in summer from the open window, in winter from his window-seat with the help of the outside looking-glass—and his experience rarely played him false. Aunt Rika always pleased him by asking, and they enjoyed the game like two children.

"Now, my man, look, what's that one?" came the question from the white roses.

"He'll play the violin well," was the answer from the red.

"Why, Solomon?" inquired the white.

"He drops his chin to the right and his shoulder to the left," the red replied.

"And that one?"

"You can see that for yourself, I should think," he answered half-offended, as if this question was really too easy. "You can't? The man's a cobbler. Don't you see, then, how he holds his thumb . . . just as if he was drawing out his waxed thread?"

But whilst the old folk amused and enjoyed themselves in their own way, only interrupting their game to talk about a neighbour to whom they kept giving friendly nods on the other side of the street, Hetty was sitting in her room at her little white birch table with a small book in front of her—quite tiny



it was, pretty and dainty. Uncle Jason had given it to her, and had himself—for he liked to potter about with pencil, Indian ink and paint—drawn a green garland in it, and inside that again written in flowing characters with little curls and flourishes a significant dedication. Uncle Jason was especially fond of this little volume, these few pages of Jean Paul, because he was a bachelor and was now decidedly nearing those years when we are inclined to ponder on the “immortal nature of our emotions.”

But to-day Hetty looked at the pages without really knowing what she read, and, certainly for the twentieth time, her eyes rested on this passage: “And thus a gold-mine of love lies almost hidden in the breast, no more than a tiny flame, until at last some word of the spirit brings it to light and man discovers the wealth that has always been there.” Hetty murmured the words and felt their gentle compelling charm without entirely grasping their inner meaning.

At the half-open casement windows the muslin curtains filled and fluttered with the breeze blowing in from the courtyard, now half in shade, and bringing with it the aromatic scent of the young walnut leaves. Hetty sat quite still, and not a sound was to be heard except now and then a splash from the goldfish in his bowl. Hetty felt disturbed, not exactly depressed, but unable to control her thoughts, as one thing after another came into her mind and disappeared again without taking any real shape. She had a feeling as though she was forsaken, dissatisfied, a feeling of loneliness and strangeness in the house and amongst the people to whom she had been bound for more than twenty years—or had it been for ever? Only in her dreams did she remember anything different. As she looked round her, nothing seemed to bear a friendly aspect, neither bed nor sofa nor chairs along the wall. Hetty felt as though she was nothing more than a guest, staying on a visit here. The only things really her own, prized and familiar, were but the small cabinet over there with its store

of tiny treasures—the little china dolls, and the cups—the two flowerpots in the window and the few books below—a company of friends that Uncle Jason had brought to her by slow degrees in the last few years, for, since he could not care for her bodily welfare, he was doubly concerned with her spiritual and mental growth. And on the lower shelf of the cabinet, the dainty little golden pasteboard casket, with its sides of graceful open work, lined below with a mirror and its lid a transparent glass picture—the little casket holding keepsakes of all kinds—her father's eyeglass and signet ring, a witty birthday wish from Jason, a schoolfellow's lock of hair, her mother's needle-case, a feather of her dear departed canary bird's and a hundred gay nothings of no value to anyone else in the world—these were hers, too. And her beauty belonged to her, face, hair, form, everything, to the very brightness of her complexion—this was something her own, her very own. She felt no pride in her beauty, only the affection we give to a friend, so dear that the praise and approval she wins touches us almost as keenly as if given to our very selves.

Suddenly Hetty got up, as if she had thought of something, took the two bunches of violets from the table and looked at them closely, examined them, untied one, went to the cabinet, took out the casket, placed it in front of her and fixed a long glance on the little picture in the lid. It represented two girls in a garden under a cloudless sky, one in pink and one in pale blue, kneeling by a bush gathering great cabbage roses that the maiden in pink was letting fall into her little basket. After looking at the picture for a time, Hetty raised the lid that fell back to the full extent of its silken hinges, lifted up her arm—like the girl in the picture—and let the violets quite slowly trickle through her fingers into the little gold basket. The purple blossoms found their way into crack and crevice and hung between eyeglass, needle-case, letters, birthday wishes, feathers, curls and little notebooks. Yet one or two fell through



everything on to the mirror below, where they now lay in contemplation of their own blue petals.

Hetty closed the little casket with a silent smile, so gentle as to be but a bare suggestion of a smile, fleeting as the summer lightning in the heavens. Then she slowly and solemnly put the box on the top of the cabinet, where the air passing through the open giltwork of its sides bore into the room the sweet scent of the flowers, sweeter now that they lay singly and no longer tied together in a bunch. And then she drew from amongst her books a little shabby volume with marble covers : her bird-book. It treated of the rearing and care of canaries, with an appendix concerning ailments and directions for successful breeding. The little volume was written in the strangest German, and full of spelling mistakes, but nevertheless it had to play a special part in Hetty's life ; it was an amulet for her, giving soothing calm and comfort, and she could even forget sadness in its pages. Now, too, Hetty opened it and read, maybe for the hundredth time : " Eight weeks after mating the little hen lays her eggs, with their delicate blue shells, in the nest." And Hetty let her thoughts wander no one knows whither.

Then Aunt Rika came in to say that Hetty must be sure to see everything was in perfect order for the evening, and not forget to look after the pike ; she was going out for a little herself, and would bring one or two things back with her, and order an open apple tart from Weise's for dessert. " Although I really don't know for whom we need to have it," she added, that she might leave the field with the last word, uncontradicted and unopposed ; no longer, however, in morning wrapper and cap, but titivated up and in full war-paint. Aunt Rika had draped a yellow Turkish shawl over her fat shoulders and blue gown, and tied a kerchief to match round her head, so arranging it on her hair that a fluttering end hung down over one shoulder. In her young days possibly this style had suited her, but to-day it only seemed



rather a joke of hers to dress in such guise and, like Madame de Staël, to masquerade with a high turban—as if straight from a Turkish harem—along the Spandau and König Streets.

Hetty got up, looked amongst her dresses in the wardrobe, and examined a light one from all possible points of view before spreading it out neatly on the bed. Then she put a little box beside it and went across the hall into the “best room.”

This was still in darkness, the curtains so closely drawn and fastened that through the opening there flickered only tiny rays of light, as fine as golden hairs. A few white covers shimmered faintly in the green dusk and the Eastern scent of faded rose-leaves, rising from four fat china pots, gave Hetty a feeling of oppression. She pulled back the curtains, pushed the three creaking windows open, and the afternoon sunlight peeped amazed into the long room. The walls here were hung with thin, pale-green silk, from which the daylight must be kept, since even without its brightness the colour was already half gone. A narrow gold border encircled the white ceiling, and from two painted rosettes hung two wooden chandeliers, painted to imitate bronze, each with six candles standing all awry and crooked in the holders, like trees after a hurricane.

If Hetty drew herself to her full height she could just reach them, and she arranged one candle after another until, true to their innermost nature, they all rose straight and regular from the curved bronzed arms. Then Hetty carefully removed the white covers from the furniture and the sofa ; all the chairs, great and small alike, freed from their wrappings, seemed to stretch their limbs as though awaking from sleep. The furniture was white, its hard varnished surface, brilliant with reflected light, and mirrored in the dark waxed floor. All its lines were straight, slender and delicate, except that the easy chairs and the two little settees had arms modelled in the shape of swans' necks, the arch white, the head golden, a dull gold

like the covers of the flat hard bolsters beside them, dull gold like their delicate canework backs. Hetty carefully dusted one thing after another ; the maid would not have done it so well after all. She dusted, too, all the cups and silver in the tall corner cupboard.

On the little console table below the mirror, between the two windows, stood a glass case over a clock guarded by a gay, moustached, china Turk in wide trousers, who was flanked on either side by a porcelain jar. This clock was the object of Hetty's special care, although she expended even almost more on a second clock between the other windows, on a similar table, below a similar mirror, between similar jars, a clock of gilt bronze, above which Cupid was sharpening his arrow. One spot on the well-waxed floor she rubbed for full five minutes to give it the polish she thought it lacked, although it really needed specially trained perception to notice any difference here from the glass-like smoothness of the surrounding surface. She watered the india-rubber trees and the palms on the flower-table, wiped every key of the square table-like piano—it was a joy to see her bustling round like this—and all the time she sang in a pleasant little voice :

“ Oh, my lovely peasant maid,  
Come into my castle ;  
Draughts of chocolate, lemonade  
Await thee in my castle.”

And she answered this love-making in mingled indignation and merriment :

“ Let me, lowly maiden, go ;  
I am not for you.  
Who I am, you sure do know,  
From the village, though I come  
And home now I must go,  
Must go, must go-o-o.”

Then she shook her duster out of the window, looked at the people walking down the street, laughed



and began her sing-song once more from the beginning again.

Uncle Eli and Aunt Minna were the first to arrive, almost before it was dark, whilst Hetty was still in the very midst of her work, Aunt Rika not back—and Solomon still signing his letters in the office.

Aunt Minna was very small, very old and somewhat high-shouldered. She wore a dark purple gown, a black lace-edged shawl, and a marabout toque on her head and, in addition, the many portions of an extensive malachite set of jewellery distributed about her old person. Aunt Minnie was as wrinkled as a dried pear, and her old trembling mouth, a little askew in her face, was somewhat like a torn button-hole. But nevertheless she carried her seven-and-seventy years very well, and that twisted mouth of hers ate and talked with speed and efficiency. Yet little Aunt Minnie said no ill, and even her jealousy of her husband was entirely unfounded, since all his interests were centred in horses.

Uncle Eli had changed his brown frock-coat of the morning for a better specimen of the same species ; only he must have had the misfortune to meet on the way, perhaps, another Mr. Under-Commissioner, for the powder lay on his shoulders white as flour. Uncle Eli was politeness itself to Aunt Minnie.

“Minnie, keep on your lace shawl, you might get a chill,” he said. “In a little you might take it off, perhaps, and later on, if it is cold, Hetty will give you one of her wraps to go home in.”

That little Aunt Minnie would be equipped for a sack-race in one of Hetty’s wraps never occurred to Uncle Eli. But I may tell the reader beforehand that it did not turn cold, and Aunt Minnie could, without fear of injury to her health, go home in her lace shawl as she had come—it was, after all, only as far as the second street-corner.

Hetty took the two old people into the dining-room and was about to light the lamp when Minnie laid a restraining hand on her arm : why should she



do that? Not for them, certainly not for them! All their days they had been used to candlelight, still had nothing else, and they would not like such extravagance on their account. Afterwards, when the others came, Hetty could bring out the new lamp.

The candles made two centres of ruddy light in the encircling dusk, whilst the sky outside and the neighbours' houses across the way in the spring evening light suddenly turned dark blue, seen through the muslin curtains, and the strange couple—the meditative old nutcracker and Aunt Minnie—sat close together, like two birds on one perch, in the pale yellow candlelight.

They scarcely spoke a word, these old folk. For when two have known each other so long, and have together suffered and seen so much—four children on their death-beds, the fall of neighbours' homes, of kings and rulers, the coming and going of French and Russians—then words become very superfluous as a means of communication. Each knew very well what the other was thinking, for no sooner did one ask a short question than the other's answer came, and if after a time the last speaker asked again and the first agreed, it was easy to see that they had both been following up the same train of thought.

Hetty meantime was busy about the room. From the great oak cupboard in the alcove at the end—a veritable house of a cupboard with a real gable as well—she took the heavy damask cloth and napkins, put more leaves in the table, spread the cloth and put out blue-patterned plates of all sizes, shining candles and red cut-glass bowls, borne on the back of bridled dolphins, not forgetting, too, the double china salt-cellars with Cupid seated between, testing with tongue the salt on his dainty finger-tips—a table decoration no family of any standing would dispense with—nor the open-work silver bread-basket. The two old folk from their sofa followed every piece with their eyes in significant silence, and exchanged glances that would have been amply sufficient in a competent court

of law to justify restrictive proceedings against Uncle Solomon on the charge of extravagance. These glances, however, did not prevent Aunt Minnie, an hour later, from making very perceptible holes in the mountains of preserved haws, quinces and greengages, that Hetty was now heaping on to the dishes from their stone jars.

Then Aunt Rika came groaning under her heavy load and following, as her satellite, Weise's servant with the tart in a cardboard box.

Rika's welcome to Uncle Eli and Aunt Minnie was not particularly cordial, but they did not seem to notice it, and Minnie at once fell upon her, without even giving her time to get her breath, for she was delighted to find a listener for her last experience with her maid.

"Just think, Rika, I tell her to bring Eli's hot-water bottle ; she doesn't bring it. I call, she doesn't bring it. I go out myself, and there the baggage of a girl is standing in my kitchen, half-naked, washing herself."

Rika was justly enraged at this hitherto unnoticed and entirely unexpected desire for cleanliness in Minnie's Minna, but had no time to give voice to this mental shock, for the bell all at once rang loudly and continuously. And since Hetty was in the kitchen, or even maybe in her room changing her dress, Aunt Rika had to go to the door herself and, what was still worse, Aunt Minnie had to postpone until later the continuation of her descriptions of the depravity of this creature—who stands half-naked in the kitchen to wash herself. She therefore determined to return to this theme—which since yesterday had filled her mind to bursting-point—when the whole company were assembled and, more than that, to ask each one individually, how they would have acted in her place.

Five of them now came up the steps under the flickering little oil lamp, Max and Wolfgang leading the way, then Jenny, then Uncle Ferdinand, and, last



of all, Aunt Janey wheezing like an asthmatic lap-dog.

As Aunt Rika leant over the balustrade and looked down into the half-darkness of the hall, she heard Solomon's voice below, mingled with the heavy rattle of the carrier's hand-cart, which had come for the cases for export, and called in a loud, high voice:

"Solomon, Solomon, the company have come."

"S.G.C. 14."

"Solomon, Solomon, the company have come."

"What do the company matter to me?" growled Solomon—"S.G.C. 15."

Meantime Aunt Janey had climbed the steps. She was Aunt Rika's sister (two brothers had chosen two sisters), a good ten years younger than Aunt Rika, but just as short, and as far round, much as if she had been hammered out in thickness. Her eyes had the same resemblance to black raisins in a pale pancake, and her mouth was quite tiny and curved like the top of a lady's reticule.

Aunt Janey had on a silver-grey taffeta gown with a wreath of wild roses round the top of the hem, her fat fleshy neck and back were bare, and showed through the pattern of the lace shawl covering her shoulders like a hundred red-rimmed eyes. She wore her shining black hair in something not unlike a fish-net.

She was like her sister in everything, except that she did not confine her benevolence only to her own person, but extended it to her three children, Max, Wolfgang and Jenny, and when they were visiting Solomon and Rika, stuffed them till they could barely stir, encouraging them again and again to help themselves and not be shy—Rika would like to give it, she said. In her own house Aunt Janey was by no means so considerate of her children's bodily welfare, and often sent them to bed with just a simple slice of bread and butter. Her husband was indeed upon her conscience, for although Solomon and Rika might squabble, still they clung to one another as closely



as links in a chain, whilst Janey and Ferdinand really lived like cat and dog, and Ferdinand had long been accustomed to seek away from home every pleasure—yes, every single one that married life has to offer.

In every point Ferdinand stood midway between Jason and Solomon; in age, height and worldly prosperity. He was not as intelligent as Jason, yet not such a Philistine as Solomon. He observed the festivals as they came. He was not so smart as Jason, but better dressed than Solomon in his own home. He sold and hired out carriages, phaetons, landaulettes, cabs, and shared Uncle Eli's knowledge of horses, although neither would recognize it in the other, and nephew and uncle alike had a firm conviction of the other's ignorance in this particular science.

Max was in his father's business, and liked to act the part of lord and future head of affairs; he was at an awkward age, with a pale face of a yellowish hue, and covered with pimples, like his mother with his loose spongy features, and entirely without a trace of the fine, slim, well-bred beauty that marked all the Geyberts in face, walk and bearing.

Wolfgang could not get into his head the Greek the monastery tried to teach him, little anæmic fellow, fourteen years of age, that he was, oppressed and beaten, for every one, father, mother, Max, teachers in class, schoolfellows on the way to school, every one of them had assumed the right to chastise him. He was not a bad boy in heart or disposition, but without much talent; shy and full of inward despair, he felt an outcast from home, family, school and stables—literally without a single thing to call his own, or a single spot where he could claim the rights and shelter of a home.

There was only Jenny who was a real Geybert, thirteen years old but beyond her years both mentally and physically. She had the true Geybert features, the long, oval face, the straight nose with the long ridge and sharply cut nostrils, the large almond-shaped eyes under their heavy lids, and masses of black hair

with a sheen like satin. Her style of dress was quite grown-up already, a pink gingham gown, not quite full length, however. She at once asked where Hetty was, for she loved her with the desperate love that little girls often lavish on a beautiful teacher. Jenny admired her, too, for in her eyes Hetty was a being of a higher order, and she used to purloin her idol's ribbons and hairpins to treasure them as objects of secret worship.

When Aunt Rika came in she was overcome with sudden amazement and horror that only the candles had been lit, although up till then she had attached no importance to this circumstance. Whatever was Hetty thinking of to welcome such visitors with tallow candles? But Hetty was not there to defend herself, and Aunt Minnie preserved a discreet silence.

The two children crept into the window corners and pressed their faces against the panes. As Jenny passed the ruddy mountain of preserved hips she took one with quick adroitness, kept it hidden for a time in her closed fist, and then snapped her jaws and cleverly threw it into her mouth. Ferdinand, Janey and Max took possession of the chairs along the wall, where they sat like three heathen idols. Ferdinand was furious that there was so far nothing to eat, for it was only for this and the whist afterwards that he had come. Janey had plenty she was anxious to talk about—a new maid, new clothes, red glass and china, as well as the choice between Schöneberg or Charlottenburg. The air was said to be better in Schöneberg, but then it was easier to get to Charlottenburg.

Then Solomon appeared ; he had gone up the back stairs and made a hasty change into the new waistcoat of silver-grey velvet and the black satin neckcloth which he had taken up with him from the shop. In these, with his high collar of dazzling whiteness, he looked not unlike an old retired officer with a somewhat stiff and serious kindliness of manner, and an air of urbanity one would not have believed



possible in the little man he was a short time back in a small velvet cap and a coat mapped out in patches.

Solomon had also invited a business friend, a purchaser from Stockholm, a lean fair man, who did not understand much German, and answered every question or remark addressed to him with a simple "Tak."<sup>1</sup> He now came in, and with him a connection of Rika's and Janey's, a tiny, little old maid, with three tight curls on either side of her face—dried up and sharp-featured, inseparable from her knitting, which she carried in a bag round her waist and held askew on her left hip as soon as she began to make her needles fly. For whom she knitted all the stockings was an inscrutable mystery. She provided all her circle of friends with them, and if the stockings she made for Wolfgang turned out too small she always knew of another pair of legs they would fit. She loved children above all else, and kissed them whenever she met them—an attention they greatly disliked—and earned as the reward of her affection that the objects of her tender devotion made fun of her, and no sooner had they eagerly gobbled up her sweets than they invented some practical joke to make her ridiculous or give her pain. On this occasion, too, she rushed towards Wolfgang and Jenny, who took refuge in horror in a corner, but resist as they might, they could not escape their fate.

Ferdinand, who made himself absolutely at home, questioned with much annoyance where Jason might be and why Hetty was not there. But in the midst of his questions voices were heard outside, and Hetty, in a French lawn gown of a delicate shade, embroidered with golden corn and a few dried golden ears in her hair—Hetty, Jason and Dr. Kossling came in. Ferdinand's face betrayed his wonder as to who this stranger might be; but Solomon went at once to meet the Doctor as he stood, embarrassed by the lights and strange faces, almost in the doorway, and begged Jason to introduce him.

<sup>1</sup> Tak = Swedish thank you.



He was very pleased, he said, to make Dr. Kossling's acquaintance, and hoped he would enjoy himself in his house ; everything was simple ; he must at once confess he had nothing intellectual to offer, but Dr. Kossling no doubt had enough of that himself, and would be glad to dispense with it for once. In earlier times all kinds of literary and theatrical people used to like to visit him—Saphir and Glasbrenner, his neighbour over the way, Angeli, the Wolffs, Rellstab and Liber—but that had all ceased now. “Just ask my sister-in-law ; she will tell you why,” he added, with a wink and a suggestion of some occurrence of days long since past.

Aunt Rika came up now, too, and scrutinised Dr. Kossling with the look peculiar to women ; the look that gains information as to thousands of things, asks and answers thousands of all-embracing questions.

“Won't you introduce me, too, to the Doctor,” she said somewhat indifferently, and her tone expressed her last and conclusive judgment about Dr. Kossling, who had already been accused, tried, and condemned before he had uttered a word in self-defence.

Meantime Ferdinand had stepped up to Hetty, put his arm round her and kissed her twice, once on either cheek. Jason never kissed Hetty ; Ferdinand always. He kissed Hetty whenever he saw her, to say good morning, to bid farewell, after meals and at odd times. He looked upon that as an uncle's privilege, and would brook no curtailment. He paid no heed to the fact that there were duties connected with the privilege and that it ought to be earned ; it is true he was always telling Hetty how he had loved her father but that the one time, the only time when he was called upon to prove his love he had shrugged his shoulders and clapped his hand on his pocket, that he never mentioned, although it would have been no news to Hetty.

Aunt Minnie came up: “Hetty, show yourself a little! My word, how fine you are! What did that lawn cost? And where did you buy it?”

"At Solomon Geybert & Co.'s, Aunt. Just here, down in the ground floor on the left."

"Tease that you are! But I think it would not do for me; it is perhaps a little young for me. Ten years ago I could have worn it, but to-day, you see, I have turned into an old woman. But, Hetty, you look pretty in it, really beautiful; it's a pleasure to see you, it really is. You don't need to hang all kinds of things about you like your fat Aunt Janey; there is nothing mis-suits a pretty person. Did you hear about Minna? Did I tell you? . . . Well, yesterday I go out of the parlour and there stands the baggage of a girl half-naked in my kitchen, washing herself."

Up came Jason now to speak to Hetty.

"By my soul, lass, you look like the beauty of the land in her harvest garland . . . with your ears of golden corn!

"The city lass would fain be beauty's queen,  
But country maids have double charms, I ween,"

he teased merrily.

Aunt Janey came up to them.

"Good evening, Hetty; is that the latest?" But she got no farther in her conversation, for Aunt Minnie took immediate possession of her.

"Did I tell you about Minna? Well then, yesterday I come out of the parlour and there stands the baggage half-naked . . ."

And here Aunt Minnie found her first patient listener.

Kossling was still listening to Solomon, but with many a confused and stolen glance at Hetty, of whom he could just catch a side view, with her white shoulders, slender neck, and hair dressed high, just such a view as showed him a part of her chin, cheek, eye and forehead lit up by the pale golden rays of the candlelight. Her shoulders, crossed by white shoulder straps embroidered in gold, rose broad and



beautiful above the neck of her low dress. Kossling was confused, and not really paying attention, as he leant only half an ear to Solomon's tales of Boucher, the Socrates of violinists as he was called. He told how he had heard him, divine player that he was; how Boucher had even held his violin behind him and played the air from Bach better than many a one with his instrument in front. For his part he could not understand the fuss they made of Liszt; people are quite crazy about him, and now the women worst of all! Liszt was gifted, of course, but personally he preferred Thalberg. He was from Mozart's time, and even if he had not sung Don Juan as well as Bluhme, still he had had quite a nice voice in his young days, and by it alone he had made his wife's acquaintance and won her afterwards.

All this went in at one ear and out at the other, for Dr. Kossling did not feel quite at home in his present surroundings; he had recognised at once that he and his hosts lived in two different worlds, quite without any points of contact. They had simply accepted life as a fact, wherever and in whatever form it might meet them. They were all so insultingly content. What more did they want? They had enough and no further desires. Their homes had ample supply of food, drink, music and literature. The discontent and anxiety of life that drove him forward, joy and good alike, were all unknown to them. Why, indeed, had he come here?

Then Aunt Rika pulled Uncle Solomon's sleeve to get him to come, so he excused himself, and Kossling was left standing by himself.

Jenny and Wolfgang had thrown themselves on Hetty and stuck to her right and left like burs, whilst the little tiny old maid, with her knitting and tight little curls, barred her way with her chatter.

Hetty stood smiling amongst the three, head and shoulders taller than them all, and looked over to Kossling, as if begging him to release her.

Meanwhile Uncle Eli on the sofa had fallen into a



sweet sleep, and sat there with nodding head and open mouth, whilst Aunt Minnie, silent and faithful, guarded his slumbers.

The Swede was talking to Ferdinand, who knew Swedish as well as the other did German, so that each missed all the points and refinement in his companion's conversation, but they did not notice that ; for, after all, what does a speaker care to hear as a rule but his own voice?

Jason was in Aunt Janey's clutches, but he made his escape when he saw Kossling alone.

"Well, Kossling, how are you enjoying yourself here? Quite nice people, aren't they? Their only fault is that they look upon themselves and their mutual relations as so terribly weighty and serious, as though all their affairs were of the highest political importance. Look over there at my sister-in-law, my brother Ferdinand's wife. Doesn't she sit there like—His Excellency listening to Boucher? And yet she brought nothing into marriage but aches and pains tied up in a handkerchief ; and even the handkerchief was a little patched."

Kossling laughed.

"A Berlin joke is better worth having than a beautiful neighbourhood, Hegel says."

"Do you see my brother Ferdinand over there? That one—to be sure, we are all alike. The true Philistine type through and through wouldn't you say? Yet, Doctor, with it all, he is still as wild a rascal as you could find. I tell you, Kossling, when we used to live together at Pinchen's and he came home in the evening he would feel in the dark on his desk for any long envelopes with summons for 'maintenance.' That's the kind of man my brother Ferdinand has been."

"Now listen, Herr Jason Geybert, Protector of the Muses and Graces, greatly as I esteem you, I cannot think this is the right place to initiate me into all your family intimacies. I would have you know your niece Hetty is looking at us already."

"My lass, come here, my darling," Jason called.

Hetty left the sofa corner where the three had pushed her, and came over to him, bringing with her the two children, Wolfgang and Jenny, each of them with head on one side, snuggled in between her arm and waist.

"Now, Hetty, you see I managed to bring him after all, although he made up his mind not to come. Look, Kossling, these are Ferdinand's children. Boy, do they give you enough to eat, I wonder. Whatever do you look like?" Jason said, putting his hand on Wolfgang's head. "You must come out here sometime for the whole summer. Well, and how is school getting on? *ίστημι, ίστησι, ίστητι.*"

Wolfgang's little pale face grew a shade more serious.

"Well, let's drop that," Jason added. "Why always speak of business? Do you know, the next time you come to see me you shall get a few nice books. I'll give you *Hinkel, Gockel and Gackeleia*. So come sometime and get it."

"When may I come?" the pale little fellow asked, with shining eyes. For, like all those who cannot get on very well in this world, he lived in another, more beautiful, with no thrashings, no irregular verbs in *μι*; indeed, no regular ones either, and the books he read in secret provided him with materials to build such a world where he could move sky and scenes to suit his every passing fancy.

"Now, Mademoiselle Hetty, may I ask how you have spent your time up till now?"

"I have been busy in the house, and read a little too."

"What? if I may ask."

"Jean Paul. On 'The Eternal Youth of our Feelings.' Do you know it?"

"Indeed I do; I know my Jean Paul well."

"Do you like him?"

"Yes, surely, he is one of the finest of all. Old-fashioned, circumstantial, not modern, but what a



mind! He clings closer to the ground than the others, but in spite of that rises higher to the clouds."

"And Wilhelm Meister?" Jason interposed.

"No, I prefer Jean Paul. This something that lies deep within us gets more from him. Jean Paul is, besides, something for those who deny, Goethe only for those who affirm."

Hetty looked at him in astonishment.

"Are you amongst those who deny?"

Kossling laughed. "That is a question that cannot be answered in a moment. I suppose nobody entirely denies. The very fact that we remain, consciously remain, in this doubtful position proves our attitude is not one of utter negation. But if I did not deny at all, then I should not be amongst the writer-herd—I should be a sailor or a gardener or a silk merchant."

The last word slipped out unawares.

Hetty flushed, and Kossling would have made some excuse but could find no fitting words.

Then Aunt Rika came to ask them to come to supper.

At the company's sudden move Uncle Eli started so quickly from his resting-place that his wig all but fell from his head, and was only saved by a quick grasp of his hand.

"Will Dr. Kossling take in Hetty?" said Aunt Rika.

And so they all sat down at the long table—Jason, Hetty and Kossling by each other, opposite to Rika and Solomon, Ferdinand next to the Swede, and the lady with the tight curls by the children, with whom she had arranged a plan of campaign to help herself to lots of preserved fruit and to pass some of it on quietly to the children, and nobody would notice.

Ferdinand had to guess what the pike cost. He was an expert at that, and rarely guessed two and a half groschen too much or too little, and this time, too, he hit the nail exactly on the head. As a reward he took a good helping, indeed such a liberal allow-



ance that Aunt Rika turned pale with fright, lest the dish should not go round.

"Stop! Ferdinand!" Jason called across the table. "You know it doesn't agree with you."

Ferdinand always complained a little of being livery and bilious.

"You will be standing, later on, by the Brandenburg Gate, leaning against a pillar, like Licinius, and then I shall sing: 'Licinius, do I meet you here at Vesta's temple, you in very truth, before the break of day?' And you will answer: 'Will you let me go?' 'No, I will not.' " These last words Jason, to the children's huge delight, chanted to the tune of an air from Don Juan. "And to-morrow, to-morrow you will lie there like a tree-trunk washed down by a flood!"

Ferdinand did not care for this onslaught, but for the moment he was too busy avoiding the bones to think of taking up the cudgels in his own defence.

"Tell me, Jason, have you heard any news of our King's health? You are generally the peripatetic 'Observer by the Spree!'" Solomon broke in upon his brother's musical solo.

"Nothing fresh."

"Report says he is not well."

"Well, he is old enough. Some day we shall all have to lie with our mouths open."

"In my opinion it would be a misfortune." Ferdinand spoke with the authority of an oracle as he fished out a bone.

"Why?" inquired Jason.

"Well, who knows what kind we might get after him!"

"I think the Crown Prince is still our one hope," Kossling put in modestly but decidedly. "He knows what our times want and lack."

"Oh, indeed!" Ferdinand said scornfully, with a mimic movement of lifting a glass to his lips.

"But what do you expect, Ferdinand," laughed Jason. "If you had the wine-cellar you'd be taking

a nip early in the morning when you brushed your teeth."

The laugh that followed put the company into good-humour.

But Aunt Rika was much upset, and said she wouldn't allow such speeches. Why, it was—democratic.

"Now, sister-in-law," cried Jason, "I suppose you still think that the monarchy is the normal divinely ordained form of government?"

The children were squeaking and giggling at the end of the table and nearly pushing the little lady with the tight curls off her chair. They addressed, too, loud and familiar remarks to John, who was in Ferdinand's employ as cab-driver and acting as waiter here to-day. He had on green livery, smelt of the stables, and, in spite of his white gloves, balanced an enormous dish so cleverly in his paws that both big thumbs dabbled in the sauce.

"I heard a joke to-day," Solomon began—"a splendid one! I'll never forget it to my dying day."

Everyone stopped talking to listen.

But Uncle Solomon was quite silent as well.

"Well?" said Jason expectantly, for he was always a willing recipient of such wares.

Solomon bit his underlip. "Good heavens, Rika, however did it go?"

"But Solomon, you couldn't possibly tell that here," replied Rika.

"Oh, my lamb, I don't mean that one at all, but the other."

"But you never told me that one, Solomon."

Here Jenny burst into an unrestrained squeak of laughter, and Father Ferdinand flared up to give evidence of his paternal authority. Jenny was not to remain at table if she could not behave properly. John was to take her away.

But the rest of the company objected to this, and Jenny stopped where she was, still giggling happily in spite of her parents' threatening glances.



"But people say Prince William is very ill," Ferdinand resumed after a pause.

"I think we should miss Gans more ; that you must agree. We have really princes enough and to spare."

Whereupon Rika remarked that she could not allow such speeches in her house, but Solomon gave as his opinion that Jason was quite right. Gans was no doubt a man quite out of the common, although he had allowed himself to be baptized. And Ferdinand told how Gans' mother had said to him shortly after he had joined the Christians: "Eli, don't rock your chair about so ; you might fall and hurt your cross ; you know it's none too strong yet."

Kossling had not heard the joke before and was much amused. He felt at his ease now, sitting so close beside Hetty, who kept a motherly eye on his bodily comfort. Besides, he, Jason and Hetty carried on a private conversation in an undertone. They seemed to have formed a secret triple alliance here, so that if one looked at the other it was with a glance of mutual understanding ; and Kossling often looked at Hetty, now openly and freely, then with secret, furtive and, as he hoped, unnoticed glances.

"You are off to Karlsbad, Solomon?" Ferdinand asked.

"Yes, perhaps this very next week. The physician insists on it, so I will go as soon as I have taken rooms in Charlottenburg for Rika."

"Look here, Solomon, I have a very good landau for you—it only needs a fresh coat of varnish. I'll let you have it for the time for twenty-five thalers—as a rule it would cost fifty even between brothers."

"So you only reckon Solomon as your half-brother," said Jason, taking part in the bargain.

"Do you know, Ferdinand, I thought I would like to try the train for once."

"That passes my understanding," cried Ferdinand. "Jason, who has no responsibilities, might do such a thing, but you, a married man . . . Up till now you have travelled quite well behind horses, and now,



all at once in your old age, you must needs meddle with things like that."

"Yes," put in Uncle Eli, "that railway business is just a fraud, I tell you."

"Never mind, Ferdinand," Rika pacified him; "he only talks like that; I know he won't do it, for my sake."

"Why not?" Solomon inquired somewhat curtly.

But Rika had no chance to answer, for Minnie suddenly threw herself full-tilt into the breach.

"Just imagine, Rika, I wanted to tell you before about my Minna. I had a fine surprise there. Lately I come out of the parlour, and there the baggage of a girl stands half-naked in my kitchen, washing herself."

"Well—and why wasn't I referred to in such a matter?" cried Ferdinand.

"On ne parle pas en présence de la servante," Rika said, with a wink and the assistance of the last remnant of her knowledge of French.

"But how long have you spoken Berlin-Colony-French?" Jason gaily broke in. Rika repaid his query with a look that, like a bitter pill, was only coated with sugar.

But now, however, whether it was that Aunt Minnie really did not understand French nor, at her advanced years, the language of eyes either, at any rate she was not to be suppressed, and began to describe her experiences with Minna in great detail, to the huge delight of Wolfgang and Jenny, who had to pay for their pleasure by sharing in brotherly fashion their father's wrath.

Aunt Minnie's tale reminded Aunt Rika that she too had a grievance, and as eagerly as a child whose sand castle has been knocked down, she hopped with delight into the conversation, and only waited for the moment when sister Minnie should vacate the field to explain how her serving-maid was no good either, so clumsy that whatever she set up with her hands she knocked down with her feet. And lately

she had run against the wall with the butter ; the mark was still there beside the door. And more than that, she was not even respectable, for as she, Aunt Rika, was a short time since in the kitchen, the butcher-boy had thrown up peas against the window. And how she washed—as if she rinsed the things in the gutter and dried them up the chimney. So she was no good for her house.

Janey only waited for Rika to draw breath when she sprang in.

“ Oh, I am quite content. I have a charming girl just now—really she knows how to set about things. I only look on when she makes pancakes. Ferdinand says he never ate any so good, not even in ‘The Swan.’ ”

“ Excuse me, Janey, the day before yesterday they were abominable,” Ferdinand interrupted indignantly.

But Janey paid no heed to his remark.

“ And such a respectable girl too. Her uncle is even a master-sweep in Lansberg on the Warte. And, Rika, fancy, she has never been to the Zoological Gardens.”

But Jason, as he remarked to his neighbour, was quite unable to grasp the connection between the girl’s virtue and the Zoological Gardens.

Aunt Janey, however, was not to enjoy her sense of triumph long, for Ferdinand ordered her not to bother people with her chatter and began himself a very interesting account of Jack Bohm, son of Bohm, the owner of the livery stables, who was such a splendid whip that he drove through the long, dark passage holding the reins in his left hand whilst he put on his boots with his right. He had seen it with his own eyes. And then he told how he had once as express-rider covered thirty-three miles in less than two hours.

This was indeed water on Uncle Eli’s mill-wheel, and he began to tell little anecdotes of his own youth and horsy jokes of a certain Seidlitz, and in a trice Ferdinand and Eli were at daggers drawn, and each



assured the other that he knew nothing about riding or horses.

Old Uncle Eli gobbled like a turkey-cock, intensely amusing Hetty and Jason with his rage.

But as the dialogue between uncle and nephew was taking on a very personal complexion and the women beginning to take up the cudgels as well, Jason determined to turn the conversation into a somewhat fresh channel, so addressed Janey in a quite casual kindly tone: "Well, sister-in-law, how are you then? Although I don't need to ask, for you are as round as a dumpling. But, Janey, do tell me one thing—what do you feed the children on? They really look like brown beer and yellow froth." This last he said with a polite smile.

It was indeed a battle-cry! Janey begged Ferdinand to protect her against such an attack, and appealed to Rika to see she was not insulted under her roof.

But Jason, smiling and unperturbed, said he had not meant to insult anyone, and would be the first to rejoice if there was no cause for his inquiry. But the children really looked wretched; just as if they did not get enough to eat.

In reply to which Janey assured him she was no raven mother, but rather a veritable pelican, which, indeed, judging from her figure, seemed more likely; that is, this was not her literal reply, but her defence, lasting full three minutes, could be analysed down to this simple formula.

When this subject, too, promised to end in a heated discussion, Solomon, with a "Children, don't talk so much; mind the bones," began to speak of Daguerre's new art, as to whether there was anything in it or whether it was only a plaything like Riddle's universal penholder that certainly looked very attractive but had been proved absolutely useless for business purposes.

Kossling said he thought that the discovery, which was in itself marvellous, would, when it was perfected, certainly have a future as soon as ever they could



manage to take people by its means. Count Pückler had photographed an Austrian peasant girl ; she, poor creature, had to sit without moving for half an hour, but it had turned out very lifelike. Nobody could possibly see what this new invention might bring forth, but in any case we could find out now what things really looked like.

Ferdinand said he had seen at Dörell's a picture of the balustrade on the Puppen Bridge ; it was blue as lightning, and scarcely anything could be recognised on it ; the thing was a swindle, like everything else that came from France.

Jason came to Kossling's help: "The future alone will show whether Daguerre's discovery is worth anything, but for my part I am inclined to think yes rather than no. It is surely success enough to have proved the possibility of making a picture by light alone. But what you say against France is not your real conviction. Where do you get the models for your carriages?—tell me that; and where does Solomon get his silks and his patterns?" And Jason, contrary to his wont, actually flushed up as he spoke.

Who knows what a storm might have arisen over the future of Daguerre's most important invention if the joint had not made a welcome interruption in the conversation; for, say what one would against Rika, she certainly provided a good table. Even Jason had to own that. She was renowned far and wide for her roast, and no less for her open tarts and candied fruits. Her table was not like Janey's, where every guest was afraid to eat if the others were to get anything, but on the contrary, everyone wondered what country grew calves with legs of that calibre—and what went out to the maids was such a quantity that each of them could well have invited all the others' sweethearts to share her meal.

Jason was asked to carve, but declined ; he said it was not the same thing here as in England, where the master of the house took up the leg by the bone and amidst the roars of the assembled company, swung

it five times round his head and then let each have a good bite at it.

Janey asked in amazement: "Is that really so?"

Ferdinand had to guess again how much the joint weighed, and Rika grew almost twice as broad with proud delight when he fell two pounds short of the actual weight.

From now on the atmosphere was less warlike, for a good slice of roast meat is generally much superior to a piece of fish in exercising a soothing influence on fiery tempers—and there happened to be several of these in the present gathering.

The talk turned on to the theatre, and Ferdinand told Kossling he would go into the Theatre Royal again when they stopped acting plays from the French, and also that the theatre was no good now. Whenever you think they are going to act *Nathan the Wise*, quite unexpectedly they play *He Requests*, by Ludwig Schneider. The theatre in Steglitz was the only one he liked, for there you could at least smoke in peace. And the opera was nothing but a continual noise; they couldn't manage at all now without big drums, trumpets, and elephants' trampling. Gluck hadn't used these, and yet *Iphigenia* was quite good music. "Or perhaps Mozart is a bad musician?"

Ferdinand said this in a tone as if Kossling himself was the creator of the opera *Nurmahal and Olympia*, or, at the very least, had inspired Spontini to their composition, whilst Kossling assured him he was as innocent as a babe unborn, and indeed belonged to quite another camp as an admirer of Beethoven.

Although Ferdinand did not agree with this either, yet for the moment he had somewhat to limit his objections, since a difference of opinion had arisen between Wolfgang and Jenny, a difference which was finding vent in angry glances above the table, in kicks underneath. For Wolfgang maintained—and justly—that Jenny had curried favour with the lady with the little tight curls and so induced her not to give him a fair share of the preserved fruit, no trifling



injury when, instead of the turnip jam provided at home, there were any amount of preserved strawberries, black walnuts and pickled quinces to be had here. But, as often happens, the superior paternal court decided against Wolfgang without first thoroughly inquiring into the circumstances, and with a box on the ears wanted to dismiss the culprit from the table. It was only by manful efforts that Jason succeeded in getting remission of the last part of his punishment. But his ears had been boxed, and no power on earth could make them unboxed. Wolfgang, however, was satisfied with even this measure of success.

Max had shown himself very reserved all through dinner, and had taken scarcely any share in the conversation except that, as soon as it touched on literature, he had given a pitying smile, for he accounted himself the coming man. This mental reserve had only given place to an increase of interest when he caught sight of the housemaid as, with bare rosy arms, she handed round the dishes. And his serious melancholy features brightened every time she entered the room.

Jason now remarked that he could not sit still any longer, and begged that the meeting might be somewhat shortened in consideration of his lame leg and Ferdinand's digestion. Or else Ferdinand would have to get the lever fetched from his stables.

So Solomon begged Rika to take the will for the deed and to save, for later on, cakes, fruit, and whatever other food she had in reserve. They would eat it afterwards in the best room, and try not to drop crumbs on the newly polished floor.

Accordingly the company went round shaking hands and wishing each other sound digestion and all other good things, just as though they had just accomplished something remarkable, and Ferdinand did not omit to wipe Hetty's mouth in his usual way, which indeed was totally unnecessary, as she had already used her dinner napkin for that purpose. But Hetty submitted to the process as a reasonable being endures treatment at a dentist's hands. Yet when Jenny



jumped on her to snatch a kiss she was decidedly less demure, and fondled and cuddled the child till it was a joy to see her.

Kossling had been keeping near Hetty, and Jason, who had to conciliate his sister-in-law, Janey, and assure her of his unalterable goodwill—for it is always better to have the womenfolk as friends rather than enemies—came up to him when he was alone again. For Hetty and Jenny had gone to light up in the best room.

“Well, dear friend,” he exclaimed, “how are you getting on here? If the company were as good as the food—do you think? But it is nothing now; the Geyberts are on the downward path. Not one of us is what the father was; not one is thought so well of in Berlin; they have just gone to waste, have my brothers. You can see that in the children. What a set! Like brown beer and——”

“I know, Herr Geybert, I know,” Kossling broke in, for Jason was beginning to raise his voice again. But he was not to be checked. “No good blood left; no breeding at all,” he cried, “and all through those cursed little Lithuanian horses.”

Up came Aunt Rika to ask Kossling if he had had enough supper. There wasn't much more to come. In her house everyone must help himself, and she hoped Kossling had done so, or it would be to his own disadvantage.

Kossling assured Madame Geybert that she had no cause to fear he had not done full justice to her culinary triumphs. As he spoke Hetty threw the door wide open, and standing on the threshold with the bright light from the chandeliers and lamps streaming past her into the dining-room, she begged the guests to come in.

They followed her invitation, Uncle Eli leading the way. The floor reflected a hundred lights, and the white chairs were mirrored in its smooth surface. The spacious room, with pale-green silken hangings, was filled with golden candlelight, in which every-

thing looked bright, pretty and inviting. The two clocks with Cupid sharpening his arrow and with the sentimental Turk kept up a busy ticking, whilst every ray and glimmer of light seemed to gather on the brown expanse of the square piano. In one corner stood a card-table all ready, and on the tea-table and the small round tables against the wall the cups—delicate frail little tea-cups—were arranged beside the fruit in openwork china baskets decorated with leafy garlands, and the silver cake-dishes piled high with proud pyramids of coffee cakes.

Uncle Eli at once went to the cake-plates, took his stand by them, picked up a yellow brown wafer cake in his finger-tips and at regular intervals followed it by others. "I like little cakes," he said to Kossling as he was passing on his way to Hetty. "Really, Doctor, I like little cakes—first because they agree with me and I can eat them late at night; secondly, they taste good—not all, of course—but these here! And thirdly, they are cheap; for instance, these don't cost me a farthing; do take a little cake yourself, Dr. Kossling!"

Kossling looked on with amused surprise at Uncle Eli's digestive feats. "Well, Herr Geybert"—everyone was Herr Geybert here—"if they really agree with you. . . ."

"My dear Doctor, I tell you anyone could digest coffee cakes, even if their hearse was at the door. And even if not," the old man added thoughtfully, "well—suppose they don't agree with me, then, at any rate, I have had one more feast of honey cakes."

Kossling quite agreed with this philosophy; indeed, he very nearly clapped the old man's shoulder and told him that in this confession really lay the quintessence of earthly comfort, but second thoughts restrained him.

\* \* \* \* \*

The company soon broke up into separate groups; in one corner Ferdinand, Solomon and the Swede



were playing whist with a dummy, for Jason could not be persuaded to take a hand—he hadn't come there for that. Of course Uncle Eli could have played with them, but he was too slow for Ferdinand. Eli always deliberated half an hour over each card, until Ferdinand got so irritable that there was always danger of his throwing the cards against the wall, as he had done more than once.

Ferdinand was a genius at the game, playing the cards with his right hand and writing a record at the same time with his left; he made the most of every card, and at the end of every game used to calculate how it would have been if his partner had drawn small hearts and his opponents had instead come off badly in diamonds. He didn't like losing—on such occasions he could be disagreeable; but neither did he ever agree that he had won, the play had always only been “so, so.”

Over in the other corner Aunt Rika had her circle with her sister, with Aunt Minnie, the little old lady with tight curls, with Max and Wolfgang, who could not sit still and lolled about like Michael Angelo's angels in the corners of the Sistine Chapel, and lastly, with the expectation of Uncle Eli when it should suit him to leave his sinecure by the cake-baskets.

Jenny never budged from Hetty's side. She had thrown her arms round her and nestled her head against her, first on one side, then the other, as they stood together in a recess near the mirror close by the piano. Jason was there too, and Kossling was anxious to join them, for there was no telling when Uncle Eli would give up his occupation; besides, being entirely engrossed in his own affairs, he did not honour Kossling with any further remarks, and declined to respond to any of his attempts at conversation.

So Kossling gave up Eli and went over to the books in a little bookcase hanging on the wall. When he began, as was his wont, to study the titles of the little leather volumes, he found, to his surprise, a good deal to arouse his interest.



Solomon seeing him thus occupied, courteously left the card-table for a moment to join him. "Well, Doctor, no doubt you have more books than I. See here, this Mendelssohn was my father's. He took out the bright little leather volume, pointed out to Kossling the dainty gold embossed work, and then opened it. "Look how well it is printed, and how fine the copper plates; no one does such work nowadays. And here is the first edition of *Nathan*. How do you like the Lessing Monument in Brunswick? I think my brother said you come from Brunswick, don't you? It is unheard of for the King to forbid the play in the theatre. Of course it's true Lessing cannot dance as well as Taglioni, still he has some merits of his own—that must be allowed. And then, do you know this here—Lorenz Stark and Thomas Kellerwurn? Not a soul reads it to-day, yet I assure you it is charming, quite charming."

"You have there Saul Ascher's works, Herr Geybert."

"I haven't read them, and I won't read them; but, after all, we must give the man a helping hand."

"Oh, do you think so?" The words slipped out all unawares.

"Well, perhaps not," Solomon replied. "I promise you, Doctor, I shan't read them."

"Solomon," came an impatient call from Ferdinand, "don't keep our game waiting."

"Doctor, you will excuse me, but duty calls." With these words Solomon left him, determined, however, to make Ferdinand pay for his want of tact.

But even now Kossling did not get over to Hetty. There seemed a fate against it, for Aunt Janey barred his way once more and inquired if he was musical, and if afterwards he would perhaps play some little thing.

Kossling assured her he was not musical, putting a bold face on his untruth, and that, for lack of talent, he would not play either. But Janey, disregarding his protests, escorted him over to Jason

and Hetty, and there recommended him for further persuasion.

"Hetty, fancy, the Doctor won't play. See if you can persuade him."

"Will you really not favour us with something? Uncle Jason always tells me so much about your playing."

"Well, you see, I only play a little for my own amusement—not well enough for others—so I don't like doing it."

"Well, Jason, then you must sing a little, later on," Janey concluded, and returned to her circle and the unsolved servant question.

"And, Dr. Kossling, where have you been in hiding, eh? You were missed, painfully missed indeed, by someone here. So you had instead to count and reckon up Uncle Eli's coffee cakes?"

As Jason spoke, Hetty stood in the window niche, straight and tall, in her light dress, leaning against the white panels with her head thrown back on her upraised arms—bare arms, plump and rosy. Her eyes, half sad, half gay, looked past Kossling into the room beyond.

"Shall we play at forfeits now?" cried Uncle Jason.

"Oh yes, oh yes, oh yes," screamed Jenny. But Hetty very quickly laid her hands on her lips so that the cloud of paternal wrath which, Heaven alone knows why, was again lowering over the children, might not burst.

"I'll kiss you without a forfeit," Jason said, drawing the child—by no means against her will—into his arms.

"You are a real little Geybert, aren't you? And those over there"—pointing to the boys lolling on their chairs—"they are Jacobys."

"Oh no, Uncle, please not forfeits—let us have a little music!"

"Well, as you like, Hetty, but it need not be just at once, for it only interrupts the talk."



"Dear friend, tell me, however did you get that gunshot?" Kossling asked.

"Shall I tell you about it? I don't like speaking about it, you know, but, if you like, I will tell you. We had bivouacked on the wet ground near Grossieten; not one of us had loosened his sword or taken off his cartridge belt, but the men, their weapons in their hands, were all sleeping round the dead camp-fires. For between us and our main army, a regiment of French grenadiers was wedged in like an axe in a block of wood, you know.

"All communications were cut off; they caught our express-riders as easily as hares. We had dispatched eight of them since the morning, one every two hours, and now, no doubt, they were all sleeping well and soundly between the hedges or the down-trampled sheaves of corn.

"I had volunteered too, the ninth in succession. Understand, Kossling, I am no coward, and when they had already fallen on my right and left I said to myself that might just as well be my fate as theirs. But so absolutely alone, without a soul near in the open country, to be blown down from one's horse by some fellow or other behind, that no one could catch a glimpse of, and to lie there, perhaps for days, half dead, with no water—I cannot say this prospect filled me with any particular joy.

"Well, I got up. I had not slept. The dispatch-bag was put round my neck in the grey early dawn, and I was cold, desperately cold.

"At first I rode slowly, then quicker and quicker, and I felt as if someone or other was sitting on the horse behind blowing the whole time on to my neck, so that my back was all cold and damp. My horse trotted without a sound along the sandy roads. The trees by the wayside were enshrouded in mist, and I can still remember the scent of the over-ripe corn—like newly baked bread. It might all have been in the barns by then, but no one thought of



harvesting it. Then the eastern sky began to colour; a long red streak appeared on the grey, and the clouds gathered over it layer upon layer, all edged with rosy red. As I looked at them my eyes literally filled with tears.

“ ‘Yes, look your fill at the little red clouds—you will not see them again to-morrow,’ I said to myself; said it over and over again, perhaps ten times—quite foolishly. I was but a young man then. But, do you know, nothing happened, nothing at all. Once I heard something like voices in the distance, and turned into a road sheer to the right; then I came almost right up to a peasant’s cottage amongst the trees; it seemed inhabited, and I rode my steed very quietly along the brook behind the hedge of willows, hidden in a thick veil of mist.

“ But I still had the fellow sitting behind me and blowing down my neck. I had been riding an hour and three-quarters, and it was now such broad daylight that I could certainly be seen at a distance of five hundred paces, so I kept as much as possible behind the trees or amongst the corn. I must, too, have nearly reached the village; indeed, some time before I fancied I had seen smoke over in the distance, a sight that made my heart light and gay in a moment to think I had got so far. Halt! A horse is lying over there in the field, swollen, and with his legs in the air. And as I look carefully I see a uniform lying under him, a uniform I knew, for I was wearing the selfsame coat on my own back. You can well believe at that moment I had very little wish to join that comrade of mine.

“ The horse lay with his back to me. ‘So they didn’t wipe you out from this side, old fellow,’ I said. From where then, I wonder? Oh, I see; maybe from over there, from those sandhills lying so peacefully yellow and red in the dawning day. So, Jason Geybert, you will be wise to keep a little to the left. It is better, too, for far away on that side I can already see our troops drawn up in line before a

spot in the bright sunshine, and it is there I must go, but a little way now, perhaps fifteen minutes more, quick riding.

“Strange, but what are those things all at once on the hill there? Each of them looks like a brown prickly globe cactus; six, eight plants side by side.

“I can see them at regular intervals against the first shimmering brightness, standing out sharp and clear up on the hillside. But, heavens above, how the hornets fly about in this part. Buzz—there’s one of them past my ear. Whizz—another already! And then all at once there is movement on the hill—a good thing I see it; so those were the high caps of French grenadiers. ‘Bon jour, messieurs! If you know your job you will, without much ado, shoot my horse under me, and then I shall come on foot to knock at Peter’s gate. And if I turn now, afterwards the wind will blow into a hole in my back, and I have never at any time been able to stand a draught at the back of my neck very well. And if I throw myself down on my horse you will no doubt be able to shoot a pretty pair with one bullet.’

“I really cannot remember if I said all that to myself at the moment, but I think not. At any rate, I did the right thing; that is, rode as fast as horse’s legs could carry me, in English style you know, bolt upright, proud as a Spaniard, as if the whole affair was no concern of mine. And I didn’t aim at any special place, but went straight ahead, over to the left. Never, either before or since, have I heard hornets buzz and whizz round me like that; as if a whole swarm were behind me. ‘The one that’s gone won’t return,’ I told myself, ‘and the one that reaches you you’ll not hear.’

“And I felt quite gay, as if the whole thing was only a joke; a little, amusing, practical joke they were playing, not on me, but on someone else; some distant acquaintance perhaps.

“Now I must surely be beyond their range. I



give a quick look back ; they have jumped up behind me, and I see them, straight and tall, on the hill, six of them at regular intervals, dark against the sunlight, as though they were cut out with scissors in black glazed paper ; three standing and three kneeling. And . . . oh, cursed fate ! One of the fellows there has pricked me a little in the leg with a long sharp needle—up here—and there is a red bleeding furrow as broad as my hand on the horse's back. The pain frightens the creature ; he takes the bit between his teeth and tears away. I drop forward, just conscious enough to cling to my horse's neck, and then I hear confused voices and see someone put a pistol to the poor beast's ear. They cut off my red dispatch-bag, and two tall, fair men take me on their shoulders and carry me to a peasant's cottage. At first they thought I had been shot in the chest, for my whole coat was stiff with blood, but that was only from the horse. And then they wanted to take off my leg, for the top of the bone—look, Kossling, here—had got a bit out of shape. But I said they must be kind enough not to, for I had no wish to hop through the world on three legs. And they saw the sense of that too."

Jason did not tell the tale as I have written it, but with much more animation and excitement in voice and gesture, often interrupted, too, by his listener's exclamations and questions.

But Jenny, before his tale was half told, changed over to Aunt Rika's circle, where less exciting and terrible subjects of conversation were the order of the day, since they were just discussing the superiority of Rosinen Street to the Charlottenburg Road, which was too busy and, above all, too crowded with people from Berlin.

Hetty had become very serious and thoughtful, for, as Jason told his tale, she was thinking of someone even nearer to her, whom the bullet had struck higher up, two years later at Ligny, between the floating ribs, as Jason had so often told her.



Kossling did not notice the change in Hetty's face, and asked her: "You did not see any more of the war?"

"I was two years old then, and cannot remember any more. But I seem to have a hazy memory of a man in a red uniform taking me on his arm. That must have been my father. But Uncle Jason has told me so much that I sometimes think it was all my own experience."

"Well, then you have only known the war from the side of the French, for in your Uncle Jason's opinion Blücher was only a boor and a simpleton."

"Kossling! Kossling!" Jason exclaimed, as a deep frown of indignation crossed his forehead. "I have given different tales of the war than those you heard at school or those your children will hear. For we have, as Frenchmen—since you are determined to hear it once more—felt better off here. For us Prussians and for us Jews there has, alas! been no 1790, so far. But, thank Heaven, we haven't seen the end of everything yet."

Kossling did not answer, and Hetty, too, showed that the whole conversation had depressed her, for this war had decided her fate before she was able to exercise her own judgment, and she had paid too heavy a toll not to hate it and its memory—just as bitterly as Uncle Jason, who had been deprived by the same war of all that he had in earlier days begun or accomplished. His poor crippled leg had certainly protected him later from Spandau, Magdeburg and Wesel, for in 1820 he had been denounced as a revolutionary, and had had to submit to long inquiries and legal proceedings.

He never spoke of this intercourse with Father Dambach, and even Kossling knew nothing of his months as political prisoner. But Uncle Jason's love for the ruling house and system of government had not been increased by these experiences.

Kossling said that neither had he many memories of the war. A horse-soldier had once, in Brunswick,

taken him on his horse, and the bearded fellow had laughed at his tears and sobs.

"Uncle, sing something?" Hetty broke in gently, almost sadly, and went to the piano.

Not till now did it occur to Kossling that it really would have been wiser not to turn the conversation in this direction. His eyes followed Hetty and he felt as though he must ask her forgiveness for his tactlessness in reviving these old stories and so giving pain to one so dear.

Ferdinand, who had just lifted his hand with the seven of hearts preparatory to dashing the piece of cardboard on to the table, as soon as he saw the preparations at the piano, let the card sail gently in an arc across the table. He had *savoir vivre*; it is true he did not care for music, but even if he found it unpleasant, he was not afraid of it and submitted to its waves and ripples without the quiver of an eyelid. But he took his revenge in merciless criticism.

His own repertoire on the piano was not extensive, consisting only of the first five bars of the overture to *Iphigenia*, which he had picked up by some chance. But he knew how to make such clever use of his accomplishment, that no one, up till now, had ever noticed that he never got beyond it. Jason was musical, but in the last few years his voice had suffered from Drucker's bad wines; they had made his throat as rough as a nutmeg-grater and his musical powers and understanding were only good enough for home requirements.

Even Aunt Minnie's circle lowered their voices when they saw Jason standing by the piano and Hetty lighting the candles.

"Sing Jean Grillon," exclaimed Janey.

Jason stood leaning against the piano with his lame leg somewhat bent, then passed his hand over his hair and sang in quick, lively time whilst Hetty accompanied with a few chords.



"I'm a Frenchie, ladies fair,  
Comme ça, with my leg of wood ;  
Called Jean Grillon, and I dare  
To take pride in my leg of wood.  
And so with laughter, hugs and kisses."—

Jenny and Wolfgang nudged one another significantly—

"Comme ça, with my leg of wood,  
This heart is Frenchie—God's truth, this is !

Ferdinand was not satisfied with his brother's vocal performance. "Jason," he said kindly, "you howl to-day like nothing but a dog baying the moon."

But Kossling said that it was quite nice ; he was always discovering fresh sides in Jason Geybert. "Do you sing Schubert?"

"Not here," answered Jason, who knew his audience. "Listen now, this is more popular, and besides, it really is quite nice. Do you know it?"

"To my uncle's quick goes Nante,  
Keen to put his watch in pledge ;  
Buys a hat to give to me,  
While we drive just by the Spree.  
When we came to cross the bridge,  
Puff ! the wind has caught my hat ;  
Out jumps Nante, springs in water,  
Fishes for and quick he caught her.  
Now, who else would have done it ?"

The last line Jason poured forth with great gusto and the children sang with him ; even Ferdinand could not help nodding his head and beating time with his feet.

Kossling, however, had heard but little, as his thoughts and eyes had been entirely taken up by Hetty, sitting proud and upright on her chair, her head a little to one side, half lost in daydreams, whilst her white hands played a few soft, unobtrusive chords to

suit the song. She could not play well, that he felt; but she had feeling for tone and rhythm, for the whole of her being was music.

"Now, Kossling," exclaimed Jason, still drying his forehead with a spotted silk handkerchief, "are you ready? Or must we first open the windows to let the last notes of my profane song vanish into space?"

"Do you like music, Demoiselle Hetty? But I need not ask after your playing. What would you like? Beethoven? Do you know this march of his?" He played with one finger the quick, clear measure and then began.

No one had ever thought that such power, such a flood of music, lay hidden in this old brown box, from which issued such tones as this green room had never heard before. Kossling played all they asked for, Barbier or Mozart, Haydn or Gluck. In the andante of the Fifth Sonata the room was filled as with an organ's note, so that even Ferdinand laid down his cards, shut his eyes, and nodded his head whilst he beat time with his foot. Then in the overture to *Figaro* the glass strings of the narrow keyboard poured forth delicate silvery tones into every hole and corner of the room.

Ferdinand got up to stand by the piano and utilised a pause to show off his knowledge. "Can you play this?" he said, striking a couple of notes. "I fancy it is Gluck."

"Of course," Kossling replied, "it is the overture to *Iphigenia*, but you haven't got it quite right: C natural here, not C sharp."

Ferdinand was quite content and pleased to be taught; his reputation was safe at any rate.

Solomon came up to Kossling now. "How you play, Doctor! It is a real joy to listen to you. I tell you—you could earn lots of money with that music."

"Well, perhaps, when all other trades fail."

"And, Doctor, do play the 'Last Waltz of a Mad-man.' It is quite a new piece. I saw it yesterday at Challier's, by the Spittel Bridge."



But that Kossling did not play.

"Where have you learnt all this, Doctor?" asked Hetty, who, as Kossling sat at the piano, had been looking at him with the same evident joy as his eyes had shown in her; for Kossling's face grew refined and inspired when his fingers touched the keys. "Where have you learnt it?"

"In Brunswick, at home, Fräulein Hetty," said Kossling, without pausing in his music. "There was an old organist—he had somehow been driven to Brunswick much as Lessing was to Wolfenbüttel—and he was a musical genius. Even when he was sober, which happened perhaps ten times a year. He gave me lessons for nothing, and always said I must become something great, do what he had not achieved. Not one farthing did he get for it, year in, year out. . . . A pity we couldn't give it him, first for us and second for him. For the old organist needed brandy, and was never so unhappy as on those ten days in the year when he was not drunk. But then his friends and his pupils never left him a moment by himself, for fear lest he should do himself a mischief."

"You are a native of Brunswick?"

"Do you know the town, Fräulein Hetty?"

"No."

Then Kossling sat down by her side and began to tell her:

"It is an old town, Fräulein Hetty, with very narrow streets and courtyards. But if some evening at sundown you see it from Windmühlen Hill, it is as red as a field of poppies. As a boy, I have sat up there many an afternoon with my books and looked down on the red town with its many gables and towers—a field, nothing but a red field of tiled roofs! Life there is not like life in Berlin. It is so quiet—just the court and the theatre, and that is all. It was too narrow for me. I could not stay. No doubt I could have got on there, for I had influential friends. But I couldn't; I am not the man for that, and would rather fail in Berlin than succeed in Brunswick!"

The approach of the maid with rolls and beer interrupted their talk for a time.

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The gentlemen were still at their cards, playing one rubber after another, although the candles had by now burnt down to mere red sputtering ends. But Ferdinand was losing, to his annoyance. Wolfgang had grown so tired that he had fallen asleep with his head on the little old lady's lap, and there she sat with her small, tight curls quite motionless and afraid to stir lest she should disturb him. Jenny's eyes were half shut, and even the Vienna rolls could arouse no enthusiasm in her. Rika and Janey began to abuse Hetty for always staying with the men—an arrant flirt she was! But Minnie defended her and said she saw no harm in it; in her time she had done just the same with her Eli. Eli was now quite wide-awake and gay, talking to the three ladies.

“They treat us abominably all our lives, do the women. The day before yesterday—my Minnie there—she says she is going to Goldmann's, they have invited her to drink a cup o' tea. ‘Minnie,’ I say, ‘stop at home; what do you want to go out in this weather for? I'll have a bucketful of tea made for you and then you can drink as much as you want!’ Well, who should go but my Minnie. At first I was angry, but when she was back again I was glad she was none the worse for it. Yes, the women treat us abominably—when we are young they do it and when we are old, ten times more!”

But Rika and Janey did not agree, and maintained it was the other way round; they, at any rate, had no power over their husbands. But Uncle Eli said it was plain enough that was not a fact, for Solomon—and Ferdinand even more so—had been nothing but Frenchmen before they were married and now they had grown into respectable German citizens. Janey smiled compassionately but, as she did not care for the conversation before her son Max, she



betook herself to the piano, sat down on the soft little chair—looking as broad as a flounder perched on it—and sang “Casta Diva” from *Norma*, whilst she fumbled about on the keys with the tip of one finger.

It was a wretched performance. Ferdinand felt it a personal insult and, in an undertone, gave his wife to understand that she was to hold her tongue; they were not by themselves here—whatever would Dr. Kossling think of it! For Ferdinand was still losing.

Kossling never gave a thought to Janey’s playing; perhaps, indeed, he never heard her song. He was happy in Hetty’s society as she sat listening to his tales of Brunswick. He told her there was nothing in Berlin like the Rathaus Market; there it was easy to understand Wackenroder . . . it was like fairyland to pass by in the evening and see the delicate tracery of the arches like the lace in a Brussels handkerchief. Here everything was so new—streets, people and houses—everything so straight; Brunswick now always looked like an untidy cupboard and yet was beautiful in spite of all.

He talked and talked. Hetty, standing in front of him by the mirror, had opened a jar of potpourri with its sweet aromatic scent; she thrust her hand into the rose-leaves, now and again raising her arm to let the delicate leaves trickle with a gentle rustling through her fingers into the vase once more.

Kossling talked of his boyhood’s friend, whom he had never seen again, although they had loved one another like Orestes and Pylades, or like body and soul. And Hetty told of like experiences, of how she still kept the outpourings on paper of love and friendship from those very friends who now ignored her entirely and scarcely spoke, even if they met her. Her bosom friend had married a Captain of the Guard here, and of course that put an end to any idea of intercourse. She sometimes had strange feelings as she turned over the pages of her album.

Kossling wondered if he might look at it; would

she be kind enough to show it to him? He would so like to see it.

"Of course, I will fetch it," Hetty said, and went. Kossling was left standing alone, for Jason, who for some little time had been hovering round the whist-table like a marten round a dovecote, had at last agreed to relieve dummy from his arduous task.

He was always reluctant to take a hand at cards, for he knew himself too well and realised that if once he sat down it would be far more difficult to induce him to get up again. His temperament ran away with him as soon as he began to play, and the premium he had paid in his youth had taught him to avoid places where cards were dealt and money handled. But here in this domestic game of whist between brothers—surely nothing much could happen!

So Kossling was left standing alone.

He felt as though every light in the chandelier had gone out; it had suddenly grown dark when the door closed behind Hetty. So long as she still stood on the threshold and he could see her white shoulders under the golden ribbons, so long as he could see her neck below the beautiful line of vigorous black hair, the room had been quite bright and festive, but now it was filled with a depressing fog.

For a moment Kossling thought of going to the ladies or to the card-table, but changed his mind and went to the books. And as he stood apparently studying the titles, he kept an eye on the white door to see when it opened.

Then Hetty came back, carrying quite unostentatiously a thin little book bound in red morocco leather, and, in a moment, the chandelier lights all brightened up again and the room was flooded with light to its farthest corner.

And now they stood by the piano, their heads close together, bending over the pages that Hetty was slowly turning.

On one page there was always delicate pointed



handwriting and on the other a little picture, a seal, a silhouette, a tiny painting, a lock of hair tied with a narrow silk ribbon, or a pressed flower : " Vivons nous trois : vous, l'amitié et moi," and a forget-me-not above it.

" Who is that? "

" A friend of uncle's."

The answer pierced Kossling to the heart ; he could have cried aloud.

" Look, here she is, my friend, Caroline Ceestov. Do you see the pretty little temple and the trees at the back? She had a turn for drawing at school.

" I asked not amiss  
For the greatest of bliss,  
When Providence gave me  
A true friend in thee.

Doesn't that sound like never parting? Such things should really never be written, for they always turn out untrue. . . .

" Here is Janey Simon. So pathetic she was and in the first class always recited Schiller's ' Laura at the Piano ' through her nose."

" ' Spin slowly ye Fates, for she is my friend ! In memory of thy ever faithful Johanna. My mark : May 15th.' "

" Oh yes, so May 15th? On the most beautiful day of the most beautiful month. But that I can well understand . . . any other day for you would have been but an insult from Providence."

Their heads were still very close together, and Hetty turned as red as any poppy. Janey and Rika were whispering behind her and the little old maid with her tight curls did not at all approve of Hetty's behaviour either ; indeed, she was so surprised and shocked at it that she dropped a stitch, a thing she had not done for months.

" Who is this here? " Kossling asked. " Who, I wonder, drew this little altar with Cupid close by? Why, it is as fine as an engraving ! "

"Oh, that's Uncle Jason's," said Hetty, turning the page quickly.

"How well he draws! Mayn't I look at it again?"

"Uncle Jason really wanted to be an artist, but his father would not allow it. Just afterwards he was to have carried on grandfather's business—he could have found scope in it for all his talents, for grandfather was Court jeweller, and all the silver things you see here—and those in the cupboard over there—we got from him. But then Jason was ill with his leg for years, and meantime the business was given up. And he would, in any case, not have continued as Court jeweller."

"May I see it once more?"

Hetty turned back, but kept her hand over the writing.

"Mayn't I see, too, what sort of verse he has written?"

Hetty slowly moved her hand a little higher up the page, so that under her thumb and the long narrow first finger with its rosy nail the name Jason appeared in tall characters adorned with wonderful flourishes.

"And I may not see any more?"

"Why not," Hetty answered. "There isn't really any harm in it either; it was only one of uncle's jokes." And very slowly she pushed her hand down.

And they both read in an undertone, line by line:

"Thy friend I'll stay till devils pray,  
And angels utter curses deep;  
Till mouse loves cat—and well-a-day!  
Till all the maids their virtue keep."

With the last word Hetty shut the book and they both lifted their heads and laughed together.

"I shall make a note of this poem," said Kossling.

Hetty pushed the book carefully into a corner of the window-ledge and said:

"We must join the others now—they are already talking about us."

And they went side by side—they had almost gone



arm-in-arm—in happy gaiety through the drawing-room to the other end where Aunt Rika sat enthroned, surrounded by her illustrious court.

Minnie saw them coming.

“Just look, Janey, what a handsome couple,” she said in an undertone.

But Janey only shook her head indignantly.

“Why, Hetty, how you look to-day—quite charming! Like Lavinia!”

Hetty and Kossling were both standing before little high-shouldered Aunt Minnie, who sat perched on her chair like a miniature purple mountain and looked down on her with a laugh.

“What are you laughing at, Doctor? It is certainly no disgrace for her to look like that. After all, Lavinia is Raphael’s most beautiful painting.”

“And you, Auntie,” Hetty said, “in your new purple gown look like—like the violet that blooms in the shade.”

“You tease. I’m just an old woman now,” the little aunt answered as bashfully as a young thing of sixteen. “In my day, I was very pretty too—but not so pretty as you—I never had your figure. You are a true Geybert, you see.”

“Doctor, how you play—divinely! You’ve no idea how passionately I love music!” Rika said with a sidelong glance that had been one of her charms thirty years ago as she smiled at the Doctor.

Hetty was astounded at this love of music, for, although she had now lived all but twenty-five years with Aunt Rika, this taste of hers had completely escaped her notice.

“Have you enjoyed your evening, Doctor?” Janey inquired.

“Exceedingly.”

“It is a pity we have had none of your company at all!” Janey continued, somewhat tartly.

“Be quiet now, the Doctor has no doubt enjoyed himself more with the young folk,” broke in Rika.

Hetty stood with tears in her eyes, although these

remarks were not really unexpected. What did they always want her to do! He had certainly not come on her account!

"I think Hetty was quite right to keep the Doctor for herself," Aunt Minnie said in kind-hearted, if not very tactful defence.

"Old wives' gossip!" spluttered Eli. "So they were to sit down to listen to the talk about Minna's young man! Am I not right, Doctor, the women-folk treat us abominably. Look out there on Gallows Hill. What's written up there? It is always the women's fault—always the women's."

Kossling defended himself as far as he could, for he plainly saw that all the blame would fall on Hetty, standing here defenceless, so he hastened, therefore, to find some other topic of conversation. He asked if they were going away this summer and where, a question that wound up Aunt Rika like a musical clock and set her off on her waltz tunes. She set all the advantages of Rosinen Street before Kossling in their best light after drawing comparisons between Pankov, Schöneberg and Charlottenburg; and she added she was going to engage rooms this very week—she was only hesitating between three sets—and she hoped the Doctor would be able to come out and see her one day.

To which Kossling consented.

And now Uncle Eli began to hold forth in great detail and with an earnestness that would have befitted a speech concerning the German nation—on scrambled eggs and asparagus—giving with such exactitude the method of preparation, and the record of good and bad asparagus years as reminded Kossling of Brillat Savarin.

This manœuvre of the old nutcracker's turned the conversation to food in general, and Hetty was lost in wonder as Aunt Rika disclosed to her sister all the state secrets connected with fruit-preserving. She would certainly never have confided her experiences to anyone else, but here she could be sure they



would not be misused. For it was much cheaper for Janey to eat her sister Rika's preserved nuts—that had to soak in tepid syrup for a week and then be pricked with a “clean” needle—than to lay in a store for herself.

Max, too, thawed at last and began a literary conversation with Kossling in which he called Gutzkow an ass and Eichendorff a driveller. He showed some respect for Heine, but said he was on wrong paths now. In any case, Langenschwarz was a greater genius; did Kossling know his *European Songs*?

Kossling sat aghast. In literary circles he had heard all kinds of criticism, but none of such impertinent audacity as this. When Max let fall that he too followed literary pursuits, Kossling advised him to translate something from English; Byron perhaps. He would thus become acquainted with the poet and would get enforced self-discipline in form and rhythm.

“I have done that already,” Max replied, wrinkling his forehead and shading his eyes with his hand; “and I was told—I was told—that my translation of *Child Harold* was superior even to Freiligrath's.”

The source of this criticism he did not disclose.

Kossling sat lost in silent thought. He wondered if he too had once been like this, and he thought of the nights filled with joy when, by the light of tallow-candles bought with the hard-earned gain of his lessons—for he gave lessons of all kinds, music, Latin, gymnastics and mathematics at one and a half silver groschen the hour—when he read for the first time *Wilhelm Meister* and *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*—he remembered as a dream those days when the *Buch der Lieder* first came into his hands and he had sat up on the Windmühlen Hill whilst the whole familiar world, the trees, the red roofs below, the mountain-ranges, blue in the distance—everything had looked at him with new, enchanted eyes. Was this now another race or only another generation?

But then something unexpected happened, something

that took them all by surprise. Janey, Minnie, Rika and Uncle Eli, all of them—yes, and the little old lady with tight curls—started so violently that Wolfgang's head slid off her lap and the boy, thinking it was time to start for school, woke with a groan. Only Jenny was undisturbed and continued her peaceful sleep on Aunt Janey's plump shoulder.

"Now, Max, I don't think that is of any interest to the Doctor," Hetty had said suddenly—had actually said it in a tone that admitted of no misunderstanding, trembling as it did with long-restrained feeling. "You are simply making yourself ludicrous."

Deep silence fell, as before the breaking of a thunderstorm.

Max answered in no audible words, only muttered something that might have been "idiot" and "family considerations."

But Janey showed herself more eloquent in her son's defence.

"I think Max's conversation interests the Doctor, at any rate as much as yours, Hetty! Stupid girl," she added inwardly.

Then occurred the second astounding event of the evening.

"As the only one, Madam, who is in a position to speak on this point, I am sorry to say you are mistaken," Kossling said, smiling very politely but very firmly, as he looked towards Hetty.

Everyone agreed that he was a very rude man who must not be invited again, and they determined to reproach Jason for ever having thought of introducing him.

Peace reigned for a moment, but a peace full of tension and the room was filled with the feeling that the time had come to part.

"Doctor, may I give you a cigar?" Eli said, producing a little leather case.

"But, Eli, you are surely not going to smoke here in the best room?"

"Well, Minnie, perhaps you think I shall go on



purpose to the New Market. Just help yourself, Doctor ; this little one is good. What a business it is with cigars, I tell you ; either they are too fat, and then they bite, or else they are not properly rolled in an outside leaf, and then they won't draw, and drop ash everywhere. For my part, I would rather smoke a pipe. In days gone by I used to take a good bit of snuff too. Just help yourself—here, I have got a tinder-box in my pocket too. You can finish smoking it on your way home, and if Mr. Under-Commissioner accosts you, just say I gave you the cigar—he knows me.”

The whist-players, too, now began to push back their chairs preparatory to making a move.

“It is time to leave off,” said Jason, stretching himself. “I scarcely know how to sit any longer.”

The Swede bowed to the three brothers with his usual “tak.” Not without good reason, for he was going home a few thalers richer than when he came. But that was no matter—for Solomon would get it back tenfold on his order.

“I say, sister-in-law,” Ferdinand called out to his hostess, “you will have to get the floor taken up here—I am firmly convinced that just here, do you see, a cobbler is buried. Or else there could not possibly be so much wax in one spot!”

“Do you think so?” said Rika, who had heard this joke of his certainly fifty times already. “I’ll send for carpenter Dörftling to-morrow.”

“I say, Solomon, could you, by any chance, give me a lantern?—it is moonshine in the almanack to-day,” Jason said merrily—“or can’t you spare it?”

“It would be just as well, Jason, I fancy, if you didn’t throw any special light on your paths,” Solomon answered.

“Now, what are we waiting for?” Eli asked, for he was all at once impatient to be gone.

“May I take another coffee cake to eat on the way?” Jenny begged, in a coaxing aside, as she cuddled up against Hetty.

Wolfgang, still overcome with sleep, literally staggered to the door, whilst Max departed with the dignity of some deposed king.

"I have really quite enjoyed meeting you," Uncle Eli remarked affably.

Kossling smiled and Jason supplemented the smile with "That, 'really,' Uncle, is delicious."

"Well, and isn't it true, Jason?"

Minnie, too, did not let Kossling go without saying:

"Perhaps you will sometime give us the pleasure of a visit. We are, of course, homely old people and our home is not so grand as my nephew Solomon's, but just come. You only need to ask for Herr Geybert's house and every child on the Steinweg will direct you."

Janey passed Kossling, Minnie and Jason with a cool, stiff inclination of her head—most ceremoniously—without the quiver of an eyelid. It is true she was not, by any means, a devoted mother, but for other people to cast a slur on them was more than she could endure.

"What is the matter with the silly creature now?" Jason asked in amazement.

Kossling was about to answer when Solomon came up to them, and shaking Kossling's hand, said:

"Do come again very soon, Doctor—and I must thank you again most heartily for our musical treat. In olden days we used to have a great deal of music; in my late father's time, every Thursday in the winter we always had a quartette evening when even the opera players used to join us. But somehow—I don't know why—we have nothing of that kind now!"

He did know why, well enough, but he saw no reason why he should discuss that with Kossling.

The passage was quite crowded with all of them looking for their wraps. Aunt Janey could not find her lace scarf and maintained that it must have been stolen, until someone told her that there it was hanging on a peg as large as life. Then she was sure that a minute before it had not been there, where-



upon Ferdinand, who lacked the preliminary knowledge necessary to understand the inner meaning of this manœuvre, advised her when she went to Schöneberg for the summer to be sure to visit the institution there with the French name where they could perhaps do something to cure her mental aberration.

Aunt Minnie, at Uncle Eli's instigation, borrowed a wrap from Hetty in case of emergency, but did not put it on.

The maid—the one with bare arms—came with a lantern to light them down the steps.

Solomon and Rika stood in the doorway, shaking everyone's hand and assuring them that the pleasure had been theirs entirely, whilst Hetty had stepped out into the porch.

Kossling took her hand.

"I hope we shall soon see each other again and that there will not be another interval of thirty thousand years between to-day and our next meeting, for we have certainly met before somewhere and sometime, although, I fancy, we have both forgotten the exact circumstances of that meeting."

"Oh no, I remember," laughed Hetty, "but I mustn't tell. So good-bye till we meet again, very soon, I hope."

"I hope so, indeed!"

Meantime, the others were passing them as they went down the broad steps by the lantern's flickering light.

The children tripped on in front, two steps at a time; the old lady felt about with her foot for every step, and Minnie and Eli had taken arms very firmly, both thinking they must look after the other, and for that reason go especially slowly, dragging each other this way and that.

Jason took firm hold of the handrail and went down step by step, whistling as he went the call for departure.

Kossling understood it, and bent down to kiss Hetty's hand, still lying plump, soft and warm in

his grasp. And it was well that it was too dark for him to see how Hetty flushed—flushed a fiery red.

Then he went without a word, his head turned, not directly towards Hetty, but enough to catch a glimpse of her in her light gown, as he passed slowly down the steps.

Hetty stood by the balustrade above, hearing more than she could see in the dark-covered stairway, with its dim flickering lights and the tap, tap of the re-echoing footsteps—heard the creaking of the gate and the high and low tones in the confusion of voices.

“Hetty! Hetty! Do come in! Whatever are you doing out there?” Aunt Rika exclaimed as she appeared in the doorway with unbuttoned bodice.

Hetty went in with slow and thoughtful steps, feeling as though her feet well-nigh refused to carry her, as though each moment she must collapse as she went straight on and put out the candles.

Meantime, Solomon came, in his shirt-sleeves—he had already taken off his coat—to say good night to her.

As he kissed her forehead he said:

“I fancy Rika is vexed with you. She said something about it. So see that is all put right again soon, my little lass.”

He never spoke in such gentle, kindly tones to her before her aunt, for he was afraid they would be wrongly interpreted.

Then he, too, went.

When the lights were out, suddenly the room was flooded by moonlight, whilst outside, roofs and ridges glistened in the rays that passed over them to paint long white bands on the dark floor.

Hetty stepped up once more to the window into the clear pale-green light that shone full upon her face as she looked down on the street. Yes, there they went in the distance. First, Janey with the children, then Ferdinand and the Swede—she could quite easily recognise them all—Eli and Minnie and



last of all Jason and Kossling. . . . She looked after them till they stopped at the corner to say good-bye and then she went to her room. The door on to the balcony stood open and the air was filled with the pungent scent of the walnut-tree, breathing its fragrance into the spring night as if it must pour out its very soul.

Hetty stepped out, almost touching the branches with her face and feeling the pleasant coolness of the iron as for a moment she laid her hot hands upon the railing.

The sky was quite dark, yet flickered as with some hidden phosphorescent light, and two solitary stars twinkled in this dark, glimmering curtain. Above her the house-walls, the windows, the roofs of the out-buildings were bright as day, gilded with the yellow light, but below, the courtyard lay in such shade that only very gradually could she distinguish any objects in it.

Hetty stood for a little space, until hearing a rustling, low voices, giggles, whispers and very cautious steps, she bent over the railing and saw beneath her a girl with a lantern and a man in a white jacket. She turned and went into her room. . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

At the corner of König Street the various groups parted and went their several ways, as did the nations after the building of the Tower of Babel.

Aunt Minnie and Uncle Eli strolled along quietly in the direction of König Bridge, whilst Ferdinand Geybert's caravan marched past them quickly in a phalanx or rather in the battle order of the ancient Germans. The Swede went to the right up Burg Street to the "King of Portugal," where he had his room, accompanied by the old lady with the tight curls, who thought it necessary to talk to him and considered it a mark of pride on his part not to answer. She herself lived in Post Street.

Jason and Kossling stood in the moonlight, at the corner of the street, watching the others disappear.

"Now, dear Doctor, what shall we do?" Jason Geybert asked, almost anxiously.

"It is late, let us go to bed," answered Kossling, who had a longing to be alone.

"Yes, young man that you are, you go home now, run up your stairs, get into bed, sleep and dream something nice. Or you light your candle, fetch Novalis from the bookshelf—he is too German for me, but I know you like that in him—you fetch Novalis from the shelf, perhaps open the window to let the cool breeze blow over the trees into your room, whilst you declaim into the night: 'The world lies far below—with its merry pleasures. Lights appeared in other dwellings, homes of gaiety.' . . . I know that of old. I used to do the same, only perhaps I read instead *Travel Pictures* or the *Titan*. But what can I do now? Do you think I can read now? I can get along very well all day long, but at night my demon seizes me. Whenever I have seen my brother Ferdinand's children, then I never get a wink of sleep. I ask you, wasn't I more fitted to have children and to educate them than my brother, who has not the slightest idea what to do with them? Well, yes. Max and Wolfgang may be quite nice lads, but it is the girl, Jenny, that I grudge to Ferdinand. Did you notice the child's walk? One day she will be exactly like Hetty."

"Yes, certainly, she is like her, very like; but there is something about her face—a little touch of something common, a hint of worldliness, just a suggestion of lack of spiritual refinement, entirely absent in Hetty."

"Yes, that is not from our side—that comes from the Jacobys. And then, this loneliness. As long as you are young, Kossling, rejoice that you can be alone, but when you grow older—about the half-century you know—then weep, because you must be alone."

"It is, perhaps, a very good thing that I did not marry, for in such married life as my brothers lead I



should have gone to ruin, have been écrasé, cassé ! And then, of course, you do not know how the others look upon us here. You have been this evening a kind of strange monster, if not the arch-enemy himself. We are outsiders at the Derby—we do not belong to them. A Frenchman and an Englishman, both of them ignorant of the other's language, will agree more easily and quickly than we and the others. There is only one aim and object for them. Have a calling—be something—make money ! If you earn ten Louis d'or every day, you are more in their eyes than all the Schillers, Goethes, Mozarts. For other things, for inefficiency, for want of accomplishment from aversion, for all justifiable failure, they have no understanding. There is only one proof for them, and that is : success. We are even for Uncle Eli the ' young man,' upon whom he looks with compassion even though we are sixty years old. My brothers used not to be quite so bad, but the Jacobys have infected them. . . . And, Kossling, though it may seem as if you found in them some response to what you feel, it is but pretence—everything goes in at one ear and out at the other. With the exception of Hetty—she belongs to us, Kossling."

Kossling was astonished, for he had never before heard Jason Geybert speak in this strain. He was accustomed to find in him one who enjoyed making an art of living with taste and unfailing mental tact, one whose lips rarely betrayed his inner feelings and who touched everything with gentle irony, so that it was impossible ever to get a clear idea of his thoughts and convictions. So many an evening in the six months that had passed since their chance acquaintance at Steheli's they had strolled together up and down the streets, talking over old favourites, discussing the poets of the day, but Jason Geybert had seldom or never lifted his mask of conventionality or led the conversation to personal topics. And therefore Kossling was the more astounded at suddenly coming upon such an ice-field of loneliness in Jason Geybert.

It almost filled him with terror to find that this man was no better off than he himself and others, but carried his own heavy burdens of misery and sorrow.

"Herr Geybert, how about getting home?" asked Kossling, turning into König Street, where in the moonlight their shadows lay long and sharply defined before their feet.

But Jason Geybert continued his train of thought, whilst the want of harmony with his surroundings brought into ever clearer relief his own inner discord. "And why not, Kossling? I dare say I could have married. Then, Kossling, I should at least have had someone to speak to and would not have needed to creep away every evening like an old hound into his kennel. But what was I then? Not a merchant, not a literary man, for I write nothing. I was not a scholar, although I attend lectures here, year in, year out . . . yet perhaps I might have . . . many a time I long for children like some old maid! Once I knew a girl of twenty, Susanne Paetov—of good family, a nice, capable little thing . . . but as these things happen, afterwards she became an unfortunate. My thoughts always go back to Susie Paetov, for I seem in just a like case."

They went on for a time, side by side, through König Street, bathed in moonlight. The moon, friend of thinkers, was exactly behind them, drawing her silver lines up round the roofs, hovering on the windows and surrounding them with the tender breath of her pale-green light. Only the eyes of the mirrors outside the windows reflected her brilliance, full and bright as green rocket-balls on a summer's evening. The chimes of the parish church floated over the roofs, with their clear and delicate notes, and from somewhere in a side street came the night-watchman's voice calling the hours.

Kossling had been strangely upset by Jason's words, expressing, as they did, so much that he himself felt but did not dare confess. It is true he had hopes enough to fill both hands, but here he was in the



thirties already and surely it was nearly time for some of them to ripen into fulfilment.

"Come with me, there is a public-house here by the König Bridge where we can get most excellent Stettin beer."

But Kossling declined.

"Or possibly Drucker's is still open. I invite you to a bottle of Chambertin—Kossling, dearest Doctor, Schleiermacher's Chambertin—the very best. A thaler, eight good groschen the bottle!"

But Kossling was not to be persuaded.

"Well, whatever do you think then? I suppose I am to bury my melancholy by myself in a wineglass, just as we throw a kitten into the Spree? And if I manage to do it, to-morrow morning it will be back again, sitting like an old man of the mountain on the edge of my bed, swinging his legs and saying: 'Jason Geybert'—that's what he says—'how is this then? Now, what have you really done here? And what more do you intend to do, Jason Geybert? Now if—as the song says—the old reaper cuts down our friend Jason Geybert to-morrow perhaps, eh?' And when the old man talks like that, I am at a loss what to answer. That is, I have a feeling I could give an answer if I had not forgotten the right words. And the old man is by no means bashful. He comes to me too, even when I am not alone, and I hear his voice, even when someone else closes my ears with his bare arms. For, Kossling, old man—it is born in us you see—I come of a gay stock, cannot fight against it, and my last journey will be to Mamsell . . ."

Jason Geybert left his sentence unfinished. "No, Kossling, we have got off the right lines; we, not Adam and Eve, are those who have tasted of the tree of knowledge. You have no idea how confident and certain such as Uncle Eli or my sister-in-law Janey are in comparison with us—how they meet with no riddles and pass through life in golden self-satisfaction—free from all brooding mental activity.

They feel themselves useful members of human society. Now I have had a finger everywhere. I should think there is nothing I do not know of those things that might fill our life and give it greater joy. I have been a soldier. You know all the lies of inspiration, fatherland, freedom and a foreign yoke. . . . I have been a merchant, have had dreams of riches and world-commerce and lost in them my money in Argentine. I have listened to Hegel on philosophy. Do you know what Jean Paul says about Hegel? He calls him the dialectic vampire of the inner man. I have listened to Gervinus on history, studied Sanscrit under Bopp, and thought, by its means, to find my way to the cradle of humanity. Gans—he is ill, mortally ill—perhaps you heard? Gans led me into the proud dwelling of law. I know my poets passably, even you must allow. . . . Yet, Kossling, it is nothing, all imperfect. There are endless limitations, things that keep their deepest meaning hidden from our eyes. They are pseudo-truths, and it is but a fictitious happiness that they have to offer. And perhaps life's true meaning lies in quite another direction—and perhaps Uncle Eli and my sister-in-law, Janey, have grasped it much, much better than we! Are not Eli and Minnie like two old horses, dragging a cart which is too heavy for either of them to move alone? And isn't Janey like a clucking hen with her children, if anyone interferes with them? "

Kossling was not so well informed with regard to Eli and Minnie, but he was able, from personal experience, to confirm the statement concerning Aunt Janey.

They were now standing, although quite unable to say how they had got there, by the Long Bridge, and the moon, now advancing, now retreating, cast her shining reflection upon the surface of the water from above, where she hung small in the cloudless heavens just over the strangely-silvered gable of the castle apothecary's shop. The Elector on horseback, a terrifying phantom, towered above the strolling



figures, and away in the bright, empty Castle Square the red flickering gas lamps flared quite unnecessarily. The gurgle of the rushing waters at the mill dam was borne to their ears on the silence of the night; the river lay before them in the green half-light, spanned by bridges as with trembling, fleeting dreams.

"Life is a river, Kossling, where we have to swim; we must use arms and legs to keep above it, to feel it is carrying us onwards. But we use only our brains, and no one can swim with head only. That is why we are always on the point of sinking, and the only wonder is we can escape so long. And then that dream—that foolish dream that we may become something, something out of the ordinary run, that we may influence or delight men, may win applause in the present and open an account for the future, thus giving others power over us instead of realising that everything lies only in our own hands. This foolish dream, Kossling, which has made you starve and suffer want for years already instead of going to the crib which men have filled for you to overflowing with office, money and titles. Wolfenbüttel awaits you. You know it was once a refuge for one worth more than you and I together. Berlin is dangerous—too noisy—too exciting. If you want to hatch a butterfly, you must not handle the chrysalis every day, or it will come out maimed or perish entirely."

Kossling, who had already felt all along that this speech referred to him really as much as to Jason, was scarcely surprised at the turn it took, nor did he take it amiss from the older man. The lateness of the hour, the silence of the encircling night, the wide, moonlit solitude of the re-echoing streets, all seemed to justify, almost indeed to demand, conversation of serious importance, a saying of those things that at other times are kept hidden in silence.

No, Kossling said, that could wait for him—he was tough and would fight his way through. Privations did not frighten him; he had always been happier out in the world than in Brunswick.

“ No, Doctor, you misunderstand me. I do not mean outward privations—they can be borne—I mean the mental feeling of exclusion from family, city, state. Have you ever grasped the inner meaning of the ‘ state ’ conception. I mean the severance, too, from quite simple human affairs, from the joys and sorrows with which these are interwoven. We always criticise ourselves, translate all our feelings into words, are our own spectators, and hence do not really live, but only dull our senses with life ; and we are not at rest, because our eyes are always straining for the new, which, after all, we do not grasp, and because we have no links to bind us to the old. We are like corn ground between the two millstones of yesterday and to-morrow.

“ But perhaps all this does not apply to you ; I speak only of myself, for no one can judge of another’s experiences. My father, you know, knew how to combine both. He had, by nature, physical strength and mental refinement. He was in the midst of the ancien régime, in the society of his time ; what was made in his workshop might have come from Paris. Everyone used to come to his house, officers and courtiers—he had his quartette evening—no new Goethe and no new Jean Paul that he did not read ! And I can still see him, in the evening, when we boys had bidden him good night, walking in proud dignity to his bedroom with a servant in front holding a thick volume of the *Athenæum* in one hand and a tall candle in a silver candlestick in the other. One of us still has a touch of the old man, the same mental refinement, the same physical strength ; she is the most like him. Did you not see his picture on the wall to-day ? Exactly the same mouth and the same long, straight nose with its broad bridge. But they are dragging the girl down. You would not believe what a fight it is, a silent contest, without bloodshed indeed, but none the less a mortal contest. And the others gain the victory. It is just such a tug of war as we used to have with Father John, between



the Geyberts and the Jacobys, and they have already captured my brothers."

When Jason spoke of Hetty, Kossling straightway forgot all that might concern him in the matter, and had but the one desire to hear about Hetty.

They were both standing by the stone embrasure of the König Bridge, at the entrance of the colonnade, that stood with its silvered arches clear cut against the depth of the evening sky. Single twinkling stars peeped through the network of the leafless branches, and the trees themselves whispered as if talking in their sleep. That keen, aromatic scent, a little sharp, like mingled resin and wine, the scent of the sap rising in the elms and poplars, was wafted on a light breeze to the two, now standing silent, apparently wondering why this narrow watercourse should be so utterly lost in the dark confusion of houses.

On the other side of the bridge a young couple, an artisan with his sweetheart, were walking along in the warm moonlight without a word, but keeping step; they had taken hands like children, and swinging their arms they walked along side by side in speechless happiness. And the two friends turned and stared after them as if under some spell, each quite entangled, struggling and flapping—like a fish—in the net of his own thoughts and feelings.

Then came a succession of fine days, an unbroken chain like sisters holding each other by the hand; beautiful tall maidens with smiling lips, and sunlight on their fair hair. It was impossible to say who was the most charming, to which of the sisters the prize must fall. This one seemed older, more mature, richer, more generous, and this again was so young and fresh, so full of teasing fun with her gay laugh that one was tempted to race and romp with her. This one only smiled, and all her movements were gentle and subdued like the silver air filled with spring yearning, and this one again adorned herself at evening-time with a spray of wild rose, which she wound round her hair. No, it was

really impossible to give the palm to any one of the sisters.

And things came as come they must ; the same marvels, as in all the years before, happened in the same order. The lilac buds opened and unfolded green leaves, still quite light in colour and limp, like children weary from growing, and down on the bank of the König dyke there was a stretch of violets whose humble green leaves were hidden by the purple flowers. And whoever crossed the bridge sniffed the scent and said very thoughtfully : " There must be violets over in that garden." The poplars cast down their swaying brown catkins to stick on every bush and to splash into the water and be carried away on its bosom or to curl up like brown, shaggy caterpillars on the wayside or over the paths. The brown elm-blossoms turned into little balls of green fruit, which covered the branches with their cushions till they looked like branches of pale-green coral ; and here and there on some trellis fluttered pink peach-blossoms, and a solitary spray of some white bloom stretched its glistening arm above a high yellow wall. The twilight grew so bold that for many hours she strove with night as to which should hold sway over the dreaming world. And people sat on stone benches outside their doors and looked on at the struggle. But in the little pink clouds, shining in the sky and touching everything with their own bright sheen, the twilight had valiant allies who every evening stood firm until the very last glimmer of light had faded away.

One fine day, however, the buds of the limes had slipped off their brown coverings too, and pale-green leaves, transparent as if cut out of silk, stretched themselves in the sun in youthful brightness. Not that all came out together, for whilst in the long rows of trees some were holding spring festival, others stood stiff and unmoved as if no warning voice had come to them and they waited for three calls and a night of warm rain before they deigned at last to



awake from their sleep. But then it was an unbroken chain of green boughs down the "Linden," on through the city gate, along the Charlottenburg high road, past the little toll-house, far, far on to Lietzov, right to the Royal Park, almost up to the golden figure on the castle roof—one unbroken chain of light-green tree-tops. And far, far earlier than anyone expected came a few really warm days that quickly unfolded every bud and brought out blossom on hawthorn, lilac and laburnum—days that soon did away with the glory of the great sheets of silver-white anemones covering the grass in the Royal Park and in the Zoological Gardens on either side of the road, peeping up even under the bushes as well—for the white petals quickly and all too soon dropped and fluttered away, whilst the delicate feathery leaves were buried under the rampant growth of charlock and cranesbill.

And things came as come they must.

On the next day Ferdinand had a slight attack of gall-stones. It really began the same night, perhaps partly caused by his annoyance at losing the game, and for forty-eight hours there he lay, to quote Jason, "like a log on the flooding water." But that did not prevent his being in a few days just as he was before in every respect.

Solomon then drove to Karlsbad with the landau, which had first to be hastily varnished for the purpose, and he found as travelling companion a diabetic member of the Financial Board, so that it was really cheaper to go in his own carriage than in a public coach from Nagler's stables; Ferdinand himself went with him as far as the New Market and told John he must give special care to his driving.

And Aunt Rika really rented in Charlottenburg, in Frau Konnecke's house at the corner of the Rosinen and Berlin Streets, three rooms and a kitchen with the use of part of the flower garden in front and of a summer-house in the large, park-like garden at the back.

Jason went, later on, every day for a few hours to

Solomon's business and hindered accountants, clerks and foremen, down to the very porter himself, in their work. They looked upon him as a kind of harmless lunatic, whose inferiority could only be compensated for by his generosity in the matter of drinks of every kind. He and one clerk, who had only been working fifteen years for Solomon Geybert & Co., were the chickens who neither knew nor understood anything of the business.

Uncle Eli was very busy, for every day between twelve and one he went to the coach office to see what horses and coaches came in and went out. And Aunt Minnie's days, too, were equally full, for she had to put matters right again with Minna. It was true, as everyone agreed, that it had been very wrong of Minna to stand half-naked in the kitchen to wash herself, yet Aunt Minnie could not tell at all what vices Minna's successor might develop; and, after all, Minna was faithful, honest, hard-working—virtues (servants being what they are nowadays) that marked her out as one in a thousand. Of course, in Aunt Minnie's younger days you could have staked your reputation on every servant-girl!

The Swede took a favourable opportunity to return to Gothenburg, and in due course five great cases stamped S.G. Co., 113-117, followed him there.

The old lady with her tight curls continued to divide her time between her love of children and knitting stockings, and the report of the King's illness remained unconfirmed. His health continuing the same, coloured silk waistcoats and ties were worn as much after as before.

Aunt Janey decided in favour of Schöneberg because the air was said to be better there than in Charlottenburg, and because the children could go to Wilmersdorf to drink ewes' milk—there was nothing more nourishing than ewes' milk! That these advantages were enhanced by the fact that Schöneberg was cheap, Janey did not mention. If she could have paid the cost of Charlottenburg like her rich sister



Rika, she would have told everyone that she could not understand how anyone could go to Schöneberg for a summer change. But as things were, the air was better in Schöneberg, and not so close and oppressive as in Charlottenburg.

Wolfgang's relations to his surroundings and to all foreign languages were still marked by continual strain.

Max read every evening with undiminished pleasure his translation of *Child Harold* that was better than Freiligrath's and Jenny enjoyed the ways of Providence to the full, so everything was really in the best of order, not diverging one hair's breadth from the safe, well-trodden path of quiet routine.

Or nearly everything—if Chance had not played a remarkable trick.

It is said that Chance is blind, and even the ancients gave the goddess of Chance a bandage round her eyes. Well, this Chance peeped out a little from under the bandage, peeped like a lover at blind man's buff, who assures himself and others that he cannot see a glimmer and yet in absolute secrecy is intent on catching the right one, that afterwards he may tell the company some fable of the secret affinity of souls which has led him, in spite of bandaged eyes, to the right quarter.

This peeping Chance now decreed that, on the following Thursday afternoon at a quarter-past five, under the clear light of a pale-blue spring sky, Hetty and Kossling should meet in König Street. It was remarkable how often Kossling had passed up König Street in the few days previous to this. He almost lived in König Street and looked upon Spandau Street as quite a side issue. He gave himself pretexts of every possible kind to necessitate his going straight up König Street; every day he brought books to the library and every day he fetched more, an operation which could easily have been performed in one journey. He went, by no means slowly, along König Street not giving the impression that he was expecting something, but hurrying along, very busy and

lost in thought—and, as he thought, without looking either to right or left.

Kossling had in his journeys frequently met old Uncle Eli and even accosted him. But as ill-luck would have it, each time a mail-coach or some other proud vehicle had driven past and then everything else lost all life and interest for Uncle Eli. Even if Vizier Abd-el-Kader, in his own august person, had greeted him then, Uncle Eli would only have intimated by a silent nod that he did not wish to be disturbed, possibly not have condescended so far as that even. Therefore it was utterly impossible for Kossling to get out of him any news of Hetty.

Jason Geybert, too, had not crossed his path these days, nor was he to be found at Steheli's either. The waiter said he had not been there for days. For it was, you must know, a peculiarity of Jason's to disappear utterly from everyone's sight for days, if not for a week, even from his family; indeed, it was at such times quite impossible to hunt him up in his own home. What he did then, where he trod along the paths of happiness, Jason never even hinted. He just appeared again in the circle of his friends and relatives as if he had never forsaken them, and they took good care not to ask where he had been hiding.

Thus, instead of others who might have told him news of her, Hetty herself came straight towards Kossling on the same side of the road. He did not even need to cross the street, which he would not have cared to do. Kossling saw her coming far off beyond two turnings, recognising her walk and bearing long before he could distinguish her features, for she bore herself like no one else. On her arm she had a little basket, so was evidently shopping. Kossling hastened to cross the turning to Klöster Street, so that Hetty might not disappear down this side street and compel him to follow her, which would deprive their meeting of the charm of pure accident.

Now Hetty stood in front of him, offering her hand with a sunny smile; she was wearing openwork silk



mittens that left her white fingers uncovered. Her eyes, her lips, every feature smiled under the lace-edged brim of her shady hat until Kossling was overcome with mingled embarrassment and pleasure. "Like a princess! like a princess!" he said to himself. For Hetty, in her simple white gown with its golden Greek pattern border and its golden straps over her shapely white shoulders, looked even taller and more dignified than before. No wonder that Kossling would gladly have spread his cloak before her that her foot might not touch the dusty highway.

"I am glad to meet you, Doctor, so that I may get one more glimpse of you."

"Why 'one more,' Fräulein Hetty?"

"Because we are going to Charlottenburg to-morrow or the day after. I am looking forward to it already, for it is so charming and we have such a beautiful garden out there. My uncle went off to Karlsbad this morning, so I, at least, will not be coming in to Berlin soon again. Aunt, of course, cannot exist a week without Berlin, but anyone born here—as I was—is glad not to see it for a time, although I am glad, too, as soon as I get back to it once more. I would not like to live anywhere but in Berlin, certainly not in any small town."

She was going away and he would not see her for a long time perhaps—this was his first and only feeling, so overpowering that he almost forgot to ask her how she had felt after the evening gathering, what she had been doing, whether she had heard anything of her Uncle Jason, whom the earth seemed to have swallowed as it did Mademoiselle Prosepine of old, whilst he—Kossling—like a modern Madame Demeter, hastened down König Street singing songs of mourning in the light of Luna's silver rays.

Hetty shrugged her shoulders.

"No, I know nothing about him. He has become quite invisible, but I hope he will not continue his subterranean life for six months. To-morrow or the day after he will come out of hiding and be just

as usual in his old surroundings. I want some books from him, too. In summer he always gives me those that need leisure and in winter those that ought to be read quickly."

"And how have you been yourself?" Kossling asked quite shyly, and his voice trembled with such tenderness that every word was well-nigh a caress.

Hetty's sidelong glance betrayed some astonishment. "Oh, quite well, thank you, nothing has happened."

Hetty did not mention that she had had some bad times and no lack of sharp speeches from her aunt's lips. Aunt Rika had run round, too, for a couple of days burning aromatic powder and swinging its fumes like incense on all sides as she poured forth abuse on men who had been so badly brought up that they dared to smoke in respectable people's best parlour.

"Nothing at all, Fräulein Hetty?"

"What should happen? Whatever happens in my life, then? Every day, you see, the housekeeping comes to attack me like some monster with gaping jaws. For the season has to be taken into account, and the fact that Uncle must not eat everything, so that I have to consider very carefully what is needed in the house. Then sometimes the dressmaker comes and Uncle brings up a few patterns from the business for us to make our choice. Then just now I have a few pieces of needlework on hand, for there will soon be birthdays. I am making a beadwork bell-pull for Aunt Minnie, as her old one is so shabby that she always says she is ashamed of it, and braiding a handbag for Aunt Janey as well. Then it will be Uncle's turn, although, to be sure, I have made him everything possible already. And now I must pack all my things for Charlottenburg. There is absolutely never any time for leisure. For days I have not had a book in my hand. Oh, but I forgot. On Sunday I went to hear *Judas Maccabæus* in the Academy of Singing. Zelter made a wonderful conductor; how he keeps his choir together."



"Yes, to be sure, it is a joy to see Zelter, a real musician. Not, indeed, a genius, but giving genius and power a fitting interpretation, and we need such a man in Berlin.

They were standing at the corner of Kloster and König Streets and Hetty seemed in doubt as to which direction to follow. "Where does your way lie?" Kossling inquired.

"Down here. I want to go to the butcher's stall in the New Market and get something for supper."

"May I help you with your purchases?"

Hetty hesitated. "Oh yes, come, of course. Or shouldn't we rather—oh no, come along here with me, Doctor."

"If you would rather not go down here, Fräulein Hetty, many roads lead to the New Market, just as many as to Rome; and, to tell the truth, I would choose those going through Potsdam so long as I may walk in your company."

Hetty laughed. "I haven't time to-day to choose the way round Potsdam, so come along."

"May I carry the basket?"

"Not now—later."

Hetty had her own reasons for saying "later" and for insisting on this "later," although Kossling carefully pointed out to her the close connection between a basket and a fish-net.

Hetty was quite right in her suppositions. For up there sat—to take the air she said—up there already sat Aunt Janey on the stone bench beside her door. With her feet on a worked footstool, Aunt Janey squatted on the little low seat like a bulldog in front of a butcher's shop, in silent attention, scanning the passers-by with glances of venomous malice on this beautiful spring afternoon. Something in this best of all worlds had evidently annoyed her; her husband or Wolfgang or her sister having more money and yet in spite of that no children—something had annoyed her. There came Hetty, with a gentleman too; and

the black jet buttons that served Aunt Janey as eyes grew to twice their usual size.

What was the meaning of this? Her niece, Hetty, walking along with a man in broad daylight like some common servant-girl! Of course—almost before Solomon's back was turned. But she had expected it of her.

Hetty nodded from the other side of the road and Kossling lifted his hat in some confusion. No doubt, then, this was another reason why the road round Potsdam would have suited him better.

"Hetty! Well, Solomon went off this morning," Aunt Janey shouted across the street, and as Hetty had no desire to carry on the conversation through a speaking-trumpet, she crossed the causeway, carefully picking her steps from stone to stone, Kossling following her at a respectful distance, and wishing Aunt Janey and all her crew at Jericho. He murmured, too, something about "the most beautiful of hours," and "that pedantic sneak," which certainly did not seem quite applicable to Aunt Janey. As he greeted her aunt he said he had just met Fräulein Hetty.

But he could say what he might; no Demosthenes nor Cicero could have made good his case. That he saw in a single glance of the aunt's as she overflowed with amiability, like a waterpot under the city fountain, and was never ending in her compliments on his divine playing, having apparently quite forgotten their passage-at-arms the other evening.

Hetty said she was glad to see her aunt, so that she would not need to come again to say good-bye. She was in luck's way to-day, for she had just met the Doctor as well.

At this point Janey could not refrain from a tart remark about Hetty's luck, a remark that prompted Hetty not to prolong the conversation, but to take her leave, since she still had a great deal to do, and really, really had not a minute to spare, sorry as she was to go.

So Hetty and Kossling went, whilst Janey looked



after them, immovable and silent. Never had she known such a thing! And as soon as the two had disappeared round a turn in the road, Aunt Janey got up, tucked the footstool under her arm and went to look for her husband in the varnishing shed and in the stables, to give him the tale in all its freshness and adorned with many picturesque touches. Nor was she a little annoyed to hear that Herr Geybert had said he would be away on important business until evening; but what that business was no one could tell her.

That Ferdinand Geybert was unfortunately detained by business just that afternoon, so that Aunt Janey was left for some time alone with her secret, was no advantage to Kossling and Hetty. For whatever might be said against Aunt Janey, no one could accuse her of being a classic witness. No, indeed, for every occurrence changed in proportion to the square of its distance in time, so that although she might immediately after have told what had happened with some approximation to truth, there was no doubt that five minutes later she would say the two had come up to her arm-in-arm and that, in twice this interval, this would grow into kisses and protestations of love on both sides. In another five minutes Aunt Janey even believed it herself, and would swear to its truth by all that was holy. So when she came to her sister Rika's she had reached the stage of believing half the tale she was going to tell her. For between her first resolve and its final accomplishment there had elapsed almost, but not quite, a quarter of an hour.

"Now, Doctor," Hetty said, resuming their former conversation, "now you know how I have spent my days. May I hear what you have done, and how you have got a good step nearer to the fulfilment of your hopes and wishes? For you surely have hopes and wishes? One day doesn't run into another with you as it does with us women. Now tell me! What are you working at? What do you do? How do you spend your time? Do you do braidwork, too, for

your worthy aunts? Did you go straight home the other evening?"

"No, not straight. Your uncle and I took a long walk through the streets. It was a lovely warm evening, and bright moonlight as well. I really don't know when we parted, and we had a long talk on all kinds of serious and weighty subjects, such as are not discussed every day of the week."

"Things that I might hear too?"

"Yes and no, Fräulein Hetty. But I really believe and hope that they are beyond your comprehension. You see, we spoke of our peculiar attitude to society, to the state, to our family, of our want of sympathy in all that interests the others. We spoke of our inability to swim with the stream, and agreed that—as things are—it is, here below, better, cleaner and simpler to be a ticket-collector than the sovereign himself, seated on Parnassus, or even his legal heir—to say nothing of all the princes in collateral lines who will never come to the throne, such as we are.

"I perhaps would have talked of other things just then filling my heart, of more beautiful and better things; of such, Fräulein Hetty, as are also pleasanter to hear; for, that evening, I was by no means in the mood for serious thoughts. They would indeed have been but a poor requital for all the kindness you had shown me. But it just chanced to be one of your uncle's serious days, and, for the first time, I saw that he was, at bottom, just like the rest of us, a distracted man. Strangely enough, I had till then always envied him because he had no money troubles, because he was older, wiser than I, and because he could lay claim to a good share of knowledge and refined taste; above all, because he found life easy, because, as I thought, he thoroughly enjoyed life's banquet. He really ought not to have said all he did, for he took from me, not affection—for such talks weave a hidden band of union—but the halo I had seen around his head. Yet perhaps I



do wrong to tell you, although I do not think I should ever breathe a word of our discussions at night to a single other living creature ; but, now, deliver up the basket, for whom else could we possibly come across? ”

After lengthy argument Hetty gave him the basket, and Kossling all but kissed the hand that proffered it.

“ But you will surely tell me, too, what else you have been doing? Yes, what you are working at, what your aims and hopes are, or mustn't we hear about them? ”

“ Why do you ask, Fräulein Hetty? I rejoice to have met you, and thank providence for its goodness when you turn what would be a Sunday treat into an everyday event.”

“ Oh, come, not quite so . . . .” Hetty interposed.

“ Oh, why talk about such things? Let us talk of something nice—of you—of your pretty new gown—of Frau Konnecke—of the castle at Charlottenburg—of little children—of Wolfgang and Jenny—I like the lad—but why of me, Fräulein Hetty? What can there be to say about me? I do what we authors all do to earn a living. I do two kinds of writing, I write my criticisms, my music reviews and my tales. I also work at biography, and have, too, a few literary hobbies to ride. There is enough to do, and besides, sometimes—but not often—I write for my own delight, write what I will, what is part of my own soul. I do not even try to finish these things, they are entirely for me alone. But it does not often happen, for our work is badly paid, and we cannot, like Kaufmann, earn a hundred thalers with a stroke of the pen, with one piece of work. I only get groschen by groschen, and a gold coin is a yellow round something that must be made to last such and such a time. But just because my own work is forbidden fruit, the result of my efforts is more mysterious, stronger, more intense, perhaps fuller of imagination, Fräulein Hetty. Indeed, I do not really want anything different—I am quite content as things are ;

for the very fact that I have little spare time saves me from depression or a sense of emptiness that would drive me to a constant rush in search of new experiences.

"I want nothing else. Don't you think I might get some editing here?—then I should have a post, an income, and could, more or less, lie fallow. Or perhaps I could go to Brunswick as teacher or librarian? You see, if that was my goal, if I really aimed seriously at these things, I would soon make my way, and find plenty of open doors. But I attach no value to them, think them unnecessary. In my opinion, our duty to ourselves is more binding. What happier am I really to earn thirty thalers more a month and to pride myself upon being a worthy member of the state? As things are, I manage. So far I have always paid for my room and food and almost had enough for my tailor as well." All this Kossling uttered in slow, jerky sentences, punctuated with embarrassed pauses.

"You are a remarkable man. I should think it needs some courage to be willing to live like that."

"Perhaps—yes—certainly! for nothing offers any prospect nowadays. We cannot help it. We are no worse than those before us; but look at our writers, not one of them will achieve anything; perhaps one may have prospects for the future, and he has to live in Paris because Germany has no place for him.

"But in fifty years' time who will know anything about Gutzkow or read Laube, Mundt, Halm or Count Pückler? Not a soul—or, at very most, a few critical bookworms. As a matter of fact, nothing ought to be written to-day. We ought first to live, just live. No Goethe will come from our ranks, no graceful Wieland, no simple, virginal Novalis. We are too distracted, too restless. We have fallen between two stools—have lost the old and not yet grasped the new. There is only the future for us, and it will owe us nothing."



“Do you work, then, for political papers, Doctor?” inquired Hetty, with a dim feeling that she must guide Kossling into safe waters.

“Political papers? There are none, Fräulein Hetty. You must, as Herr Jason Geybert’s niece, you really must know that. Is there any political science at all now? I suppose you give that name to the foolish wavering this way and the other, this secret action, this everlasting creeping in a circle like a cat round a plate of hot soup. Let any man to-day speak out what he really thinks and to-morrow he will dine in the lock-up. The next thing will be the suppression of all publications except the state newspaper. You see, all our best men who might help us are exiled from the country. Börne, enthusiast that he was, had to die abroad and in harness. To be a political writer here in Berlin is—as things now are—to be a rope-dancer, a fire-eater, a suicide. And what use to give one’s life for a thing one does not after all believe in? For, however brutal it may sound, my own well-being, my spiritual well-being, is of more account to me than that of the common herd. I believe I should feel just as happy and just as unhappy in a constitutional state like England as I do here.

“And yet perhaps there is something in it. The freedom of movement influences us perhaps, and we become changed. The German, I tell you, is never himself; first he is scholar, then student, then official, accountant, lawyer, professor, footman, clerk—everything he is, but never himself. Not one of us gets beyond the limitations of his office, and therefore it is better not to have one at all. You think that is criminal, that one must think of the future. Fräulein Hetty, Heaven only knows where we shall be then. I have accustomed myself not to look more than a week ahead. I mean only to live for the day, and that gives me quite enough. For example, to-day has brought me you.”

Hetty looked at him almost gratefully, for she liked

to know that she had given him pleasure, innocent pleasure, simply by her presence.

"Dear Doctor, I understand all that, yet it is all so new and strange to me. You see—amongst us it is quite different. Amongst us no one breaks away from his family"—she flushed with excitement—"no one can do as he likes. Everyone is pushed and poked by all for good as well as ill. Take, for example, Uncle Jason. If Uncle Jason, with his gifts, has not achieved anything in life, it is the fault of his father, his brothers, his Uncle Eli, their wives—yes, of them all, every one. But that Uncle Jason, nevertheless, has kept on the top, that he has never gone under, is just as much their work too. I do not know how to explain it to you. The family to-day would certainly find Uncle Jason fifty thousand thalers to pay gambling debts, and yet they would not find him two and a half silver groschen if he wanted to buy a book. And it is the same with me."

Hetty bit her lips, as if she had said too much, and stopped talking.

"Well, now we really will talk of something else ; tell me about Charlottenburg. I should like to drive over again to the Royal Park. How beautiful that must be now with its old trees and the pond of carp who know so well when spring comes. Have you been in the castle? It is pretty, isn't it? Its whole plan, the lofty cupola with the golden railing and the golden figure at the top?"

"Yes, when she hears twelve strike, she turns round . . . but only when she hears it, Doctor."

"Did you see the many Chinese porcelain vases, the china plates, cups, the little Turkish bowls, the tiny figures and grinning monstrosities? But a woman has quicker eyes for such things than we have. Do you remember the rooms with the high, oak wainscoting and the vaulted white ceilings like a winter sky? Whenever I went I used to dream of living there one day, but the custodian told me it was not to be let as a summer residence. The little friendship's temple,



the officials' wing at the back, between the yew trees, would have pleased me, too, just as well ; there by the water, in the round, yellow building, the little pleasure-house, you know.

But whilst in the castle itself everyone would disturb me, whilst there I must really be alone, nothing in the world would induce me to live by myself in the little house ; there someone must be with me to help me bear my loneliness, someone dear with whom I could talk, sing, play and walk day and night ; if I could get that, I would ask for nothing else in the world, and would live there all the winter too, never wishing for any other home. But that is not to let either, the custodian told me. Moreover, I have not so far found anyone who would share the house with me."

Hetty's laugh was a little embarrassed. "Well, the first and most important thing is to get them to let you rent the little temple, and to see that it is not too dear for you—for in Charlottenburg they really scarcely know what they may not ask for the few summer months. The other matter could be settled later, and I am sure you would find no difficulty in that."

"No, I think the other matter must be settled first, for I should die after an hour's loneliness in that delightful solitude. But we won't quarrel over a mere fancy."

Meantime they had reached the Marien Square. Up there the butchers' stalls, a group of little wooden booths clustering against the church wall, were surrounded by a crowd of women and servant-girls, a noisy stream hurrying along in the shade from stall to stall, whilst the church tower, standing unmoved in eternal silence above this petty bustle, pointed to the pale blue spring sky and leant its sunlit spire against a solitary white cloud.

"I am going to buy up there. But, now, give me the basket. I might come across acquaintances, and they would wonder why my servant was not in livery."

Kossling handed her the basket ; they crossed the street, mingled in the crowd, and were carried along with it from stall to stall. Sturdy white forms with fleshy, bare, muscular arms occupied most of the available space in the cramped booths, where they only had just room enough to move their arms, take half a calf from the hook, lift it over their heads and bring it down with a heavy crash on the bench. There was space for nothing else, for from the hooks along the walls hung rows of gory oxen quarters, whole calves without their heads ; sheep and wethers hung there too, blood slowly dripping from their gashed throats, and whole mountains of creatures' heads were piled up until they almost touched the brown and red sausages dangling from the low roof.

It was indeed a wild orgy in crimson that extended to the very depths of the dark booths, accompanied by the unceasing clang and crash on the chopping-blocks of the axes wielded by brawny arms with such force that it seemed as though the blade must be deeply embedded in the wood or the brass bands encircling the block must burst asunder.

The brass scales flashed up and down ; on one side someone was weighing a calf's hindquarter on a Bessemer balance, holding it out at arm's length ; on the other someone else was looking for calves' liver under a mountain of other meat—and then the uproar—the uproar, the confusion of women's voices—and the dust from numberless shoes and coats.

Hetty knew quite well where she meant to buy ; one had no good meat, another was too dear, one was too disobliging, another gave light weight, and at last she found her man, got her piece of meat for a few groschen, as well as a fine marrow bone that the polite butcher popped into her basket as make-weight !

“There now, my shopping is done. When Uncle is away, we are very economical.”

They turned their backs to the crowd and struggled for a time against the stream, to the annoyance of



those coming in the opposite direction, and almost stumbled over the street urchins who, in their eagerness to snatch at any scraps, crept about in all directions between the purchasers' feet. They were glad when at last they had escaped from the smell of blood, the clatter of scales and weights, the clink of money, the noise of barter; the jokes and jests pouring out from the stalls, and stood in the open square, where all the hubbub became but a distant murmur.

Kossling turned round once again. "And even that is beautiful because it is true. Look, Fräulein Hetty, look at the stalls huddling together by the wall like fungus shooting up in autumn round an old tree-trunk. Fräulein, you may laugh, but it really is beautiful, not only amusing, as Glasbrenner says—it is actually beautiful as well, because it is life, hot, pulsating life."

"Possibly—but I have never thought about it, I have always been so busy thinking where I could get the best meat."

Kossling felt annoyed that something over which he had often thought, thought long and deeply, something which seemed to him a question of vital importance, should be dismissed by Hetty with a single word, for how was he to know that Hetty's "possibly" was but the forerunner of a whole chain of thoughts and meditations.

They were soon entangled once more in the narrow network of streets in the old town, where the small, uneven footpaths in front of the houses scarcely allowed the two to walk side by side. Not only that, but the woodcutters standing in the gutter sawing up wood, and then chopping the sawn pieces on great blocks, often enough forced Kossling to follow Hetty like some distant satellite.

The citizens were sitting with their wives and children outside their doors, looking from the dark, narrow little streets up away over the roofs to the white brilliance of the spring sky. Every doorway seemed

to emit its own special scent—here freshly tanned leather, there bales of calico, on one side the aroma of coffee and nutmeg, on the other of horses and cowstalls. And many of the people, enjoying a leisure hour, accosted Hetty, and looked after her and her companion as at some strange apparition.

The milkman even got up from his little bench with a deep and respectful bow and raised his sonorous voice to wish Mademoiselle Hetty—as was an excellent customer's due—a good evening.

That his courtesy compelled Hetty to leave the narrow strip of footpath and take refuge with her fine patent leather shoes in the very midst of the gutter's unspeakable depths never occurred to him.

Kossling was anxious to resume their former conversation, for it had been impossible to carry on any connected talk whilst he had to drop behind, or while they stumbled along together, now stepping on one side, now stopping to give place to other pedestrians, and he was just beginning when Hetty's name was called, and she stopped before a ground-floor window well within her vision. There sat Aunt Minnie in a silver-grey dressing-gown, perched in a high chair close to the window, looking out into the world with her wrinkled face and kind, good-natured eyes. Beside her stood a high basket filled with household linen, and she was in the act of mending something large lying on her lap. Nor did her needle ever stop, however much she talked or looked at her neighbours.

At the other window, also on a high chair in exactly the same position, Uncle Eli, dressed in the long blue frock-coat he wore on his walks abroad, was sitting bolt upright, horn spectacles on his nose, reading the *Observer by the Spree*, that he held at arm's length—and when he read, he was dead to the world, hearing and seeing nothing. Consequently, he showed not a spark of interest as to whether Hetty, Kossling or anyone else was coming.

“Good afternoon, Aunt!” Hetty exclaimed as she



stood exactly in front of the open window, whilst Kossling kept a little to one side.

"Oh, Hetty, what are you doing? Come in for a moment! Have you any news? When are you going to Charlottenburg?"

No, Hetty had no news, only that they meant to go to Charlottenburg the very next day.

"Oh, do come in, Hetty. The Doctor will come too. He promised us, in any case, to do us the honour."

Kossling hesitated, but Hetty told him he need have no scruples about going in.

It was an old house where Uncle Eli and Aunt Minnie lived, with no broad porch like Uncle Solomon's or Uncle Ferdinand's, but, as the only entrance, a little oak door nicely carved in many curious and elaborate patterns, with a bright flap of pierced metal over the keyhole and a shining brass handle. The fanlight over the door was divided into a symmetrical pattern of tiny panes; to right and left of the doorway two grey curtains hung down from the urn surmounting it, curtains made of plaster, with fluttering ends and many deep pleats.

Hetty opened the door and led the way in, with Kossling following her in timid embarrassment.

It was a narrow, half-dark passage into which they stepped, and at the very end a steep staircase led almost perpendicularly to the next floor.

However do the old people manage to get up and down, Kossling wondered. But then Hetty had pushed open a door and they went in.

The room was bright with white walls, and in the centre stood a table on curved feet with bronze mounts, and the whole top was completely covered with an inlaid floral design. Two tallboys with large keys were also adorned on every drawer with whole bunches of flowers in coloured woods. And round the wall were others covered with all kinds of china figures, big and little—hunting scenes, shepherdesses, a lady in a farthingale nursing a lapdog, a passionate love

scene and Hector taking farewell of his family ; bright birds and little vases painted in terra-cotta in striking and wild confusion. And then a china cow, a big speckled cow with a fly on her nose, so that she looked as if she must sneeze. Rows of high-backed gilt chairs—gilt all over, even to the cane seats and the high backs—stood in utter boredom along the walls. An old chandelier made of glass, but with broad yellow bronze arms, from which hung the slender crystal drops, hovered in undeniable self-complacency above everything, catching every ray of light reflected from the white walls. The two old people sat at the two windows on their golden chairs with high, broad backs, placed on the raised window step, and making Kossling think involuntarily of royal thrones.

Hetty looked at him as if to ask : Now, are you sorry you came ?

Uncle Eli still either did not or would not notice anything, then he looked up. "Good day, Hetty. Well, how goes it? Ah, Doctor, I am glad you have found your way here. Tell me, Minnie, did you know Rosalie Zimmermann?"

"How should I have known Rosalie Zimmermann?" Aunt Minnie retorted somewhat sharply, as if she had been having some difference of opinion with her old friend and husband.

"Well, Minnie, if you didn't know her"—and it was evident he was intent on a joke—"you will, of course, not be able to grasp the grief of her survivors. For she died yesterday evening at half-past five. It is in the paper."

Hetty laughed, but Aunt Minnie was to-day in no humour for jokes.

"Well, Doctor," Uncle Eli continued, "do take a seat. Listen to me ; I want your opinion. Here I'm just reading something in the *Observer*—that in Mexico the lads of every kind hang the rattlesnake up on a board and slash it with a whip until it stings its own tail and kills itself. Do you believe it? It's a dangerous game, anyway. And why ever should any-



one put a rattlesnake into a half-grown child's hand. Now, why, Doctor? "

But Kossling could give him no reason.

"Aunt, what are you doing there?" inquired Hetty, who was troubled that Aunt Minnie did not put down her work.

"Patching your uncle's shirts—you see that, my lamb," said Aunt Minnie with some sharpness. "I tell you, it's incredible the shirts that man tears to bits! one a day."

"Well, dear Minnie, I tell you what," answered Uncle Eli, quite unperturbed, "there's the window, if you don't like the shirts, pitch 'em out."

"There, do you hear, Hetty? Pitch 'em out, he says, the good linen shirts. Really, your uncle—well, he gets queerer every day! I tell you, Hetty, he is past putting up with, and some days he's so deaf that I have to scream myself hoarse to make him hear."

Hetty tried to calm her aunt, whilst Uncle Eli did not retaliate, but turned to Kossling.

"Doctor, have you heard the latest? There's going to be war."

Hetty started. The word "war" always went through her like a knife.

"Oh, come, Hetty," said Uncle Eli, who was evidently bent on fun to-day, "it is not exactly certain yet, but people fear Russia and France will declare war about Taglioni. For she is to appear in Paris and Petersburg at the same time, and so far she does not know how she can manage it."

Kossling and Hetty laughed, and even Aunt Minnie nodded graciously, for, after all, she was proud to have a husband whose words met with approval.

"Well, Uncle," said Hetty, "you are very gay to-day."

"And why not, Hetty? No one knows how long he will have the chance. For, unfortunately, I must tell you that I can't manage ballet-dancing very well now, and gymnastics are quite beyond me."

Meanwhile Kossling turned his eyes with some interest in the direction of the furniture.

“Do you like the furniture, Doctor? It seems to me it’s something quite different from the stiff little chairs nowadays. Look how well they are made, all of them over fifty years old, and yet not the slightest chip in the gilding. You’ll find the same kind in the castle here. They have cost a tidy sum in their day—I fancy fifteen thalers a chair, or even more. I’ll look it up. I have a note of it somewhere. I couldn’t buy them to-day. How much money, Doctor, do you think I used to have? Three hundred thousand thalers and more! I lost a great deal in the war—a very great deal, and that the French took from me. Well, not eight groschen of that shall I ever see again. And I say to myself, if I really still had all that money, what then? And for whom, perhaps? After all, I can’t eat more than enough, and to-day we had a very good dinner indeed—trust my wife for that. . . . Of course, I’ve never been so lucky as my nephew, Solomon; he only has to pick up eight groschen and straightway it turns into a thaler! I have, when I think about it, yes, I have always just come a day too late.”

Minnie shook her head with such indignation that the frills on her muslin cap fluttered to and fro.

“What are you shaking your head for, Minnie? It is no disgrace to have had money once upon a time.”

“Hetty, tell me,” Minnie interrupted in her fear of further disclosures from Uncle. “And, Doctor, say what may I get you? I have some very good coffee cakes”—(at “coffee cakes” Uncle Eli pricked up his ears. “Well, bring them out, then,” he said)—“and excellent hip preserve and some ‘green huntsman’ wine, mild as rosewater, not the least bit sharp.”

But Hetty explained she would not eat anything now before supper, and least of all drink any green huntsman, and Kossling agreed with her.

Uncle Eli was furious. “You shouldn’t ask—you



should give it ! ” But Aunt Minnie did not heed his expostulation. Their refusal was enough for her.

“ Hetty, I say, if you really won’t take anything, do go into the parlour ; your uncle has given me a new easy chair ; do try it—I believe it’s just heavenly for a nap.”

But Hetty was afraid she would waste her time in sleep, so must put off trying the new arm-chair until another time. When she was back again in Berlin, or she would, no doubt, come in sometime from Charlottenburg, and then she would be very pleased to spend a little time in the new easy chair, lost in drowsy meditation.

The conversation showed signs of coming to a standstill, and Kossling was getting impatient for Hetty to make a move, when Uncle Eli, with great solemnity, as though the question were one of life or death, inquired :

“ Now, tell me, Doctor—what sort of Doctor are you exactly ? Not of law ! And you don’t cure folk, either, do you ? Well then, what kind of a Doctor are you really ? ”

Kossling laughed.

“ How can I explain ? At the end of my studies here in Berlin, I passed an examination and got the title of Doctor—Doctor Phil—Doctor Philosophiæ.”

“ Good,” Uncle Eli replied. “ Now, excuse my asking, but tell me, does that bring you in any money ? I only ask from curiosity, I don’t know anything about learned matters,” he went on with apparent simplicity.

“ Yes and no. In my profession it is a good recommendation, and besides, it always gives me something to fall back upon ; my back door, so to speak. If by any chance I should want to get a post at home, as master in a public school, as librarian or editor of a paper, then I must have my doctor’s degree.”

Hetty had risen from her seat. “ Dear Uncle Eli,” she said a little ceremoniously, “ I must go home

now. I have to get everything ready for to-morrow, and Aunt sends you her best love. She will soon come in to see you or you will come out to us, we hope. At the corner of Berlin and Rosinen Streets you will find us, at Frau Konnecke's—Konnecke's, don't forget."

Kossling, too, got up and shook hands with the two old people. Eli insisted on seeing them out, whilst Minnie waved to them from the window and called out messages to Hetty until she felt assured they were out of hearing. Then she attacked Uncle Eli, who had quietly taken to his newspaper again, and, moreover, at exactly where he had left off.

"I don't understand you, Eli," she said in her loudest voice, so that he might not be able to take refuge in his deafness. "How could you drive the man into a corner like that?"

But Eli listened quite undisturbed.

"Well, I know why I did it," he then answered with the air of a clever dog who had something quite special up his sleeve.

"Oh, I didn't know," replied Minnie, who at once understood his meaning.

"Well, it's only my idea: he's a nice-looking man. I should just like to know what he really is."

"Of course, a very nice-looking man he is," Minnie agreed.

"What concern is that of yours?" Uncle Eli broke in. For, in spite of his seventy-nine and a half years, he was still as jealous as a Turk, an attention Aunt Minnie paid back in his own coin.

"Well, I suppose there is no law against saying so," Aunt Minnie answered in self-defence.

"Well, you see, that's why I wanted to keep my eyes open. You never know, it might be a chance for Hetty! What are you shaking your head for, Minnie—always shaking your head, you are! Why shouldn't it do for Hetty?"

"I really can't imagine, Eli," Minnie replied with oracular deliberation, "however you can think of such



a thing. Someone different from this will have to come for Hetty. What is he, then? A writer! And do you fancy Solomon will give Hetty to him of all people? Already there have been others quite different that they would have liked. And do you think Solomon will by any chance give Hetty to a Christian, do you think he will now?"

"Well, I don't see why not; he could, for all I care," Uncle Eli answered, taking up his paper again as a sign that he was no longer free for conversation.

Hetty and Kossling walked along for a time, side by side, like two friends whose thoughts are busy with the same subject.

It was beginning to grow dark, and the walls of the houses away over Alexander Platz suddenly shone with a bright silvery light. Hetty had not quite liked her old uncle's questions; she felt them tactless and interfering, although her woman's intuition told her why the old man had laid these traps.

Kossling, too, entirely candid as he was, and totally incapable of any subterfuge, had felt that there was some inner meaning in them, and had come away slightly ill at ease, in spite of all the kindness that had been shown him. Now he wanted to think of something quite different, and as he spoke of unimportant matters he cast stolen glances at Hetty, at her forehead like opal, at the shadows from the lace on her broad-brimmed hat playing across her heavy, arched brows. His eyes, too, turned secretly to her feet that trod with such light, firm steps in her grey, high-heeled low boots. He felt the rhythm of her movements as she moved by his side. He longed to take long, eager draughts of this beauty, so full of life and so good to look upon, for who could tell when he could once more find refreshment at this fount of beauty, who could tell how long he must traverse the grey, monotonous desert of everyday life before he met once again this living beauty? No, he would take away with him all that eye and mind could grasp of her. Afterwards, in his solitude

up in his room, when his eyes turned to the corner where he was wont to seek her vision, he would find the treasure he had brought away all too small. And the picture would in any case lack that sense of vitality that surrounded him at this moment with such force and reality as almost to take his breath away.

To-morrow she would leave Berlin to live quietly outside for months, and he would have no more opportunity of meeting her here. The realization of this suddenly seized him, oppressed him, made him weary and strangely sad—wearily and strangely sad, like the pale pink, evening sky above, with its little grey cloudlets creeping up in rows and lines to spread as far as eye could reach . . . weary and strangely sad like the houses clustering beyond the square, shining now in a mysterious red light and shutting off the distance like some magic wall of rock. Weary, and strangely sad . . . but why?

Kossling was, indeed, not at all sure if he loved Hetty, really loved her. In the last few nights, when he could not sleep, he had tried to prove he did not; nor did he know if she was clever, amiable or pleasing—he had wasted no thoughts on that—all he wanted was to see Hetty, to feel all her beauties at his side. He could not breathe without her, and could not understand how it had been possible to live, wanting her. Yet he did not love her, so he told himself. He had no eager desires for signs of her favour, no prospects, no hopes; he stood before her as a beggar desiring some pious gift of her beauty that should make him infinitely richer and yet be no loss to her. He had never thought with the passing days what should come of it. Besides, nothing was to come of it; his only desire was to see Hetty. And if God, up in His heaven, would grant him some loophole whence he could look down on her, he would stay there quiet as any mouse, never budging day or night, in utter forgetfulness of food or drink, rest or sleep—and to-morrow she was to leave Berlin for months!



But, all at once, Hetty, who had been walking for some little time soberly at his side, began to speak, and Kossling started at her words. Had she been listening to his silent thoughts? "Now, Doctor," she said, dropping her head so that Kossling could not catch a glimpse of her face, "to-morrow I have to leave here, and must say farewell. We shall not be able to go shopping together then. Have you made any plans yet for the summer?"

No, what plans could he make? He had not been thinking of his affairs lately.

"Well, I meant, whether you were going away too."

For the moment Kossling's brain roared and hammered like any blacksmith's shop as he struck balances by the hundred, reckoned up every single groschen that he had, would have or might possibly get, all to confirm what he already knew: it could not be done, he was not able to move to Charlottenburg, he was tied to Berlin. His sources of revenue were here, and even if he had to teach Latin and give music lessons—here he must stay. And he couldn't even pay for two rooms. Heavens above, not even the few wretched gold pieces!

"No, I have no plans for my summer at all; no doubt it has plans for me. But since Charlottenburg is so near Berlin that it only takes an hour and a half to get there, I will take care not to leave Berlin."

"Well, then, I shall be sure to see you soon."

"But suppose you are not there, and I do not find you?" Kossling interposed in a voice that betrayed the anxiety he felt at the very thought of such a contingency.

"Why shouldn't you find me?" laughed Hetty. "I shall not come in much to Berlin; now, my aunt cannot endure it out there for three days even—it is too lonely, and that she does not like. If she cannot see the drays stopping outside her window so that she can read the labels on the packing cases, and find out whether Jonas Stern is sending away

more or less than Solomon Geybert & Co., then she is deprived of all interest and pride in life."

"Then, if you allow me, I shall come out, and perhaps we shall see one another often. For it is indeed pleasant to get out of the city on a fine spring afternoon with a definite aim and object, and to know that we shall find at the end of our journey something that gives us joy"—he had almost said "that we love," and was thankful the words had not escaped.

They had again reached the corner of the Spandau and König Streets. It was by now fairly late, so there were but few foot-passengers, and only three or four carriages from Alexander Square raised clouds of dust as they drove by at full speed.

"Now I must go home. I think Uncle Jason will be there. Twice already I thought I saw him, and the third time it will come true. It never fails."

"Oh, but it does. Lately I thought I saw someone twenty times at least, and never met them after all."

"What, never at all?"

"Well, yes, at the very last I did," Kossling unwillingly assented.

"Well then?" Hetty asked a little roguishly, with a look that made Kossling hot all over and set his temples tingling as with the prick of a thousand needle-points.

Now they were in front of Hetty's home, whose broad porch gaped like some dark cavern, since the lamp in the passage had not yet been lit. And higher up, above the weather-beaten medallions with their encircling garlands, one could just discern the whole row of broad, high window-frames surrounding the dull eyes of rounded glass panes.

The employees were coming out of the office, for it was closing time for Solomon Geybert & Co.: one after another they came, and to every one Hetty gave the same friendly greeting. Last of all came the old book-keeper who, for the past twenty years, had



been entered in the firm's yearly inventory. This shabby, crusty old fellow, as grumpy as a beaver driven out of his home, fumbled about with the great keys at the door leading to the business as he came out, lifted his nose in the air, sniffed right and left, and toddled off to Schönhaus, the suburb where he had a nice little home and garden—toddled off without even deigning to notice Hetty.

"Whatever's the matter now with this Demcke? What *is* the matter? Some upset or other, no doubt, between him and Uncle Jason—it is the same, thank Heaven, every year."

Hetty stepped into the porch and Kossling caught sight of her bright face outlined against the dark purple background extending behind her.

"I must go up now," she said. "By the end of next week I think we shall be fairly settled out in the country."

And she offered her hand to Kossling with gentle indifference—that beautiful hand, slender but not thin, with fingers round as though turned upon a lathe, peeping out from her openwork mittens. Kossling took it very carefully, as if afraid of hurting her, and slowly raised it. Hetty's arm unconsciously obeyed until he gently touched her finger-tips with his lips—he felt as though they kissed some flower petal, so soft was her hand. He was only thankful that he was facing darkness, for his eyes burnt and smarted strangely, as though filling with unwonted moisture.

"Farewell, ma belle," he said in slow, dispirited tones, "farewell, ma chère . . . or do you permit—may I say, ma belle chérie?"

Hetty answered: "Good-bye, until our next meeting."

"Saturday, then."

"Perhaps."

"Perhaps."

When Hetty was half-way up the steps, she heard once more a very gentle "Farewell, my belle chérie," but she was not quite sure whether it was only an echo

in her ears and that Kossling had already gone, or whether he was still standing at the foot of the covered steps and had really uttered the words. And she hastily ran up the remaining steps.

On the topmost stair it struck her that Aunt Janey would certainly have been there in the interval to bring a report of her and her companion, and she at once determined to disarm all reproach by telling, first thing, quite quietly, that she had met Dr. Kossling by accident and had spent a little of the afternoon chatting with him.

If she had thought there could possibly be anything not quite seemly in this, she would certainly not have taken Kossling into Uncle Eli's. Besides, she would say to her aunt as well that she was now old enough to do as she chose and knew perfectly well what was fitting.

When Hetty rang, the bell sounded clear and loud, jingling and jangling on and on as though it would never stop, and as she stood there, hot and excited in the warmth and darkness, she could hear voices inside. Yes, to be sure—it was Uncle Jason and then Aunt Rika's high, slow tones. And mingling with these a voice she did not know—small, oily, guttural—a voice that awoke in Hetty the disagreeable mental picture of an old, dark, reddish-brown wool rug. Why, she did not know. And she heard first her name and then Kossling's, but could not make out in what connection.

After a time her aunt came to open the door. Hetty was surprised to see her in her new low-necked gown of pale-grey foulard spotted with black, and said to herself that it must be something very special to induce such afternoon attire.

After her first greeting she was going on to tell about Kossling, when her aunt cut her tale short with :

“ Guess, Hetty, who is here ! ”

Hetty could not guess. For the fact that Uncle Jason was there would be no sufficient answer to the riddle.



“ Julius ! Just think, Julius ! ” her Aunt burst out at last, at a rate to which Hetty was very unaccustomed.

If Aunt Rika had told her that Vitzliputzli had just come down to earth and in his majestic self had visited her in Spandau Street, it would have been equally enlightening to Hetty—or more so ; for Hetty did at least know that Vitzliputzli was a divinity whom the ancient Mexicans used to honour with offerings of blood—but she had not the faintest idea who “ Julius ” might be. Search her memory as she might, she could not find, at the moment, a single page inscribed with the name of this Julius whose presence so excited and delighted Aunt Rika that it made her entirely forget all reproof as regarded Dr. Kossling.

Aunt Rika could not fail to notice that this Julius was for Hetty a somewhat imaginary hero, so she repeated in her old, slow speech :

“ Now, Hetty, you surely remember—Julius, the second son of my sister-in-law Birdie in Benshen, you remember of course—a son of my late brother Nero. Why, he was here once before. You will be astonished to see how he has altered. You won't recognise him at all.”

Of that Hetty was sure herself, for it was eighteen or twenty years since Julius had been in Berlin, and she no longer had the slightest recollection of what he looked like. She did not even know whether he had a straight or crooked nose—she only remembered that at the time—it was in Charlottenburg, too—he had in some way made himself very unpopular and had therefore gone home more quickly than he came. For her uncle, one fine morning, had taken him in one hand and his little box in the other and when, at dinner-time, someone asked where Julius was, uncle had said that he had been sitting since half-past ten in the express coach to Posen, so that, with God's help, he would be by now at least as far as Strausberg.

This Julius was twelve years old then, and his mysterious disappearance had impressed Hetty more

than his personality. "Hetty," her Aunt began, as she went into her room to take off her hat, "I think you will like him, a gentleman from head to foot. Now, come quickly, then."

Hetty hung up her lace shawl with a sigh and looked longingly round her room. The windows stood open, the muslin curtains fluttered into the room, all so quiet and peaceful. Outside, the walnut-tree, in front of the balcony, had now unfolded its dark young leaves and behind its open network of branches a last stray sunbeam lit up the crooked brown tiles on the roof of the outhouse—a late greeting from the sun, who had said farewell to the earth half an hour before, but, like some devoted lover in this spring-time, could still not part with her, but turned again and again as he went away and threw her kiss after kiss. And the reflection of this light on the roof-tiles filled all the room with a strange, ruddy light.

Hetty would so much have liked to be by herself for a little ; but there, this Julius of Aunt Birdie's in Benshen had just come—God knows why—and she pulled herself together and went over to the dining-room, for all was silent now in the best room.

Aunt Rika had just lit the lamp ; as a rule when they were by themselves they only burnt candles.

Jason was sitting in the easy chair, and the new cousin rose from the sofa and came to meet Hetty, accompanied and protected by Aunt Rika's tender glances.

Hetty could see in him but little of the gentleman. The cousin—well, he was no cousin at all of hers—was short and fat as though he had been hammered down, looked very well and red, and had thick stiff hair that absolutely refused to lie down round his forehead or on the top of his head, but stood out in all directions like the spikes of a hedgehog on the defensive.

Yet he was not ugly, and had little gay eyes, hiding cunning in their depths. His hand was small and broad, and when, as he offered it to Hetty, it lay for a moment in hers, she felt as if the top joints had been



chopped off, the fingers were so short. No, Hetty could not see much of a gentleman in him. His clothes, the bottle-green colour, their cut, all struck her as old-fashioned and countrified. This waistcoat pattern had long since been discarded in their stock-room below, and this watch-chain with the coins and the broad silver links was the kind the peasants always wore when they came in to market. In comparison with Uncle Jason, who was nearly always something of a dandy, he cut, indeed, a very poor, provincial figure.

But after all what concern was he of hers, this cousin Julius Jacoby from Benshen, who after all was no real cousin at all?

"Well, Mademoiselle Hetty, I expect you have forgotten me by now," said Julius Jacoby, in the small, oily voice that so exactly suited his appearance.

"Oh no, not at all. You have not changed much," Hetty falsely asserted, in spite of the fact that she had not the slightest inkling of any memory of him.

"Nor have you, dear cousin; you are still just as pretty as you were then."

"I am no cousin at all of his; what's he talking about!" thought Hetty as she suddenly had an unpleasant sensation of having touched all unawares some live clammy creature, a frog or a caterpillar.

"What a pity, terrible pity, that Uncle is away," the new cousin remarked; but it was evident he only said it for the sake of saying something.

"Yes, we miss him here," Hetty answered, as she pushed a chair up to the table, in which operation the new cousin—who was after all no cousin at all—tried in vain to help. And at that moment Hetty seemed to see some mysterious connection between her Uncle's absence and the arrival of the new cousin—who was no cousin at all—some intrigue, something she could neither know nor guess, but which seemed to forbode coming unpleasantness and danger to her. And that mysterious feeling of a clammy touch overcame her once more and actually made her shudder.

“ Well, Uncle Jason, I haven’t seen you for such a long time—you look so vexed ! Is anything the matter ? ”

“ Oh,” Jason answered, striking the table with his open hand, “ I really can’t endure this everlasting worry in the business.”

Hetty was a little surprised, for his worry could not be of quite such long standing since Jason had reappeared down below in the office that very afternoon for the first time—after a year’s absence. But Hetty was wise and said nothing, although Jason might perhaps have been the first to appreciate the force of this objection.

“ But I shall write to Solomon—he must get rid of Demcke—he or I must go ! We cannot possibly go on working together. I will not submit to the dictatorship of this ass.” He turned to Julius Jacoby. “ For he really is an old ass—a merchant of the old school—a retail shopkeeper and a pedantic old slow-coach. I have an upstir with him now every year ! ”

“ Yes,” Julius Jacoby answered, leaning far over the table and speaking eloquently with his hands as well. “ I tell you that’s exactly how it was with my principal in Posen, just as you say, Herr Geybert : a retail shopkeeper and a pedantic old slow-coach. That’s no good, nowadays. No matter how much his father and grandfather did business like that. It is no good nowadays. And I told him so. The merchant to-day must be cosmopolitan, he must follow the course of politics, keep his eyes open and not hang himself on to a quarter of an ell of gingham too much or too little. We modern traders can’t do that any longer. Isn’t that right, Herr Geybert ? ”

Jason looked at him with quiet amazement in his large grey eyes, and only Hetty noticed the admixture of scorn and bitterness when he slowly answered as if weighing every word before he uttered it. “ Certainly, we modern traders can no longer hang ourselves on to a quarter of an ell of gingham too much or too little—there you are quite right, Herr Jacoby.”



"But, Jason, I say, you won't really write to Solomon about Demcke," Aunt Rika broke in anxiously. "You know, don't you, that he mustn't be excited, the physician said. And, after all, Demcke has been so long in the business. Leave him alone and he'll leave you alone."

"But that's just it, dear Aunt Rika," Julius Jacoby interrupted in a tone of superior knowledge, "then they take such liberties. In our business at Posen there was a book-keeper who had begun with the old Rosenstein and then been with his sons. Do you think afterwards he would take any orders from the head?"

Jason looked at Hetty, and in that look she read quite plainly. "Do you see he is trying to catch me now, this fine young cousin from Benshen, but I'll show him my teeth."

"Well," he said, "and what are you going to do here, Herr Jacoby? Are you staying here only for amusement?"

The new cousin seemed somewhat embarrassed, but he quickly saw there would be no harm in showing his hand here.

"No, certainly not, Herr Geybert. But, you know, a man of my sort can really only live and get on in the capital. I must be where things are moving a little. Even in Posen I felt everything too small. In all probability I shall get an independence here. I have a partner in view, too—we made one another's acquaintance in Posen—wholesale leather trade. I've very good prospects for this in Russia. I tell you there's lots of money to be made nowadays in leather. Leather is still a very good line—not so depressed as manufactured goods and silks."

"Do you say so?" Uncle Jason remarked, shaking his head as if deeply regretting the fatal depression in manufactured goods! "Then in Posen you are better informed than we are here. For in Berlin they say that, owing to the reduction in imports from England, there has been enormous improvement in manufactured goods the last few years."

“ The big firms, yes, of course, the big firms. I didn’t mean them. They always have a good turn-over, no matter what their line. But you ought to hear how the small manufacturers complain just now, out in the provinces. And didn’t Selke & Seligman—and Selke & Seligman was a good firm, a very good firm—come to grief last year with shoes and stockings? ” Hetty’s thoughts were far afield, busy collecting her things, out already in Charlottenburg, so that she could only see her immediate surroundings through a veil, darkly. This cousin Julius—who really was no cousin at all—bored her ; this lively, little bristly hedgehog, with his bluster and praise of the leather line and its advantages. She gave a smothered yawn as she turned to the window and looked out into the blue twilight. Nor was she sorry when she could go out to see about supper.

Meantime Julius went on talking without a pause ; his mouth, with its firm, red lips, never stood still for a single moment. He talked about his coach journey, his travelling companions, how he had almost come to blows with an officer—but he would have let him have a good dressing-down—about his first principal in Benshen and his last principal in Posen, both of whom would have been rich people by now if they had only followed his advice ; talked about his sister Rosalie and his sister Flossie, who was, unfortunately, a little deformed ; talked about his late father Nero, who had had erysipelas and eczema on the top of it—in fact, he suffered from general impurity of the blood. And he talked about his aunt Goldine who, although not compelled to, still did the finest patterns in cross-stitch without using glasses ; about the theatre in Posen, where last winter he had heard *The Italian Woman in Algiers*, and once the extemporiser Langenschwarz. No one need imagine that Posen was in any way behind Berlin.

Jason sat opposite him, nodding now and then in thoughtful acquiescence, and apparently watching his mouth with an interested look in his grey eyes.



He was amused by this new cousin Julius, with his garrulous, provincial self-sufficiency and his mixture of impudence, cunning and good-nature. He allowed himself to be immersed in this flood of chatter as in a warm bath, in pleasant inactivity of body and mind. He really scarcely heard what the other was saying. None of it concerned him. He did not know either the people or circumstances, and his world had nothing at all in common with the new cousin's.

Aunt Rika, too, listened in much the same silence, only showing her interest by an occasional question. She felt at last—at last—in her element once again. This was something quite different from these everlasting Geyberts, where no one ever knew what they meant or if they were only making fun, exciting themselves over hundreds of things of no concern to anyone: politics, books, theatres and newspapers, matters that didn't affect anybody. Aunt Rika grew quite red and her little black jet buttons of eyes began literally to shine with delight. She thought something of her own flesh and blood, and here at last was one of her family again. Just like her late brother Nero; she was really overjoyed to see how her nephew Julius had developed—far more than she had expected—and what *savoir vivre* he had—a gentleman through and through!

When Hetty came in again, this cousin Julius—who was really no cousin at all—was leading the conversation—and continued to do so. Jason, on the other hand, had grown very silent, only shaking his head from time to time.

“Do you know, if there is anyone I envy, it is this knight of industry,” he whispered to Hetty. “A gay youth! Troubled neither by doubts nor scruples.”

Hetty nodded. She compared this obtrusive self-assertion—for what else was it?—with the modesty of another, who said more in one sentence than this little, bristly hedgehog managed to express in a whole evening.

“But really anything like that ought to be killed,”

went on Jason very softly after a short pause. "It really ought to be done," he added fiercely, aloud.

"What ought to be done, Jason?" Rika inquired in anxious surprise.

"A letter about Demcke written to Solomon," growled Jason.

"Jason, don't do it, I beg of you—let it alone. Solomon will only be annoyed about it, and then he'll have to begin his treatment all over again."

The new cousin Julius never noticed in the least that perhaps he was talking a little too much. He was blissfully happy to hear his own voice, and it never struck him that the rest of the company really had no use for the intimate details of the last business post he occupied in Posen. Every time anyone made a modest attempt to lead the conversation on to topics of more general interest, the new cousin Julius at once hung on to his principal in Posen as fast as a gudgeon on to a hook. He had no interest in anything at all outside himself. He showed no surprise at the pretty china or the old silver used at table, nor at the new steel engravings bought by Uncle, which Aunt Rika showed him—nor did he say whether Berlin had impressed him or how he liked it—everything he had so far seen or heard had disappeared without a trace. He only talked of his principal in Posen who, if he had followed his advice, would by now have been really and truly an enormously rich man.

Hetty, however, could not understand why the new cousin had not followed this advice himself, or why he had felt compelled, out of pure good-nature, to leave it entirely for other people to use.

It was quite evident now that Jason's patience was nearly exhausted and who knows what might have happened—for he was never to be trifled with—if Aunt Rika's good cooking had not given him a kindly tolerance for the faults and failings of his fellow-men?

Aunt Rika had hunted out from the secret recesses of her store-room whatever could be found there, and it was nothing less than a miracle of nature that she



could now, at the end of April, put on her table a breast of goose as young and delicate as if it were the 1st of November. The smoked salmon, too, was as sweet as a nut and had not the very slightest nip about it.

Jason occupied himself thoroughly with the investigation of these strange phenomena, and in so doing entirely forgot his anger with the new cousin Julius—who, however, was really no cousin at all.

“I say, Hetty, what will you give me, if I do something to please you?”

“Give you, Uncle? Well, what do you want? My love once more? Is that enough for you?”

“Right, Hetty, that will satisfy me. Look, sometime, over there in a corner of the window-sill and in the paper there are a few books for you, for quiet mornings out there in the summer-house at Charlottenburg. I chose them with the same care as your Aunt Rika did this evening’s supper for the worthy new cousin Julius.”

Aunt Rika flushed and plucked her skirt. That was another of those truly Geybert jokes. As if it was not just as good every day in her house. But she quickly recovered her composure and showed no sign of irritation.

“Well, Jason, don’t you enjoy it, too?” she asked with marked friendliness. For Aunt Rika generally grew more amiable, the more anything was rankling in her mind. That he had enjoyed it, Jason was obliged to confess with a laugh, and so came off less than victor.

“What are they, then, Uncle?” Hetty inquired, for she did not dare to fetch the books to the supper-table, because Uncle Jason was as painfully particular with his books as with his clothes, and if he found any one of them with a page marked or the cover a little rubbed, he could not bear the look of it any longer and gave it away to the first comer, no matter who it might be. In course of time he had got so far as practically never to lend his books and only made

an exception in favour of Hetty, who knew how to value them and took pains to show herself worthy of the favour.

“ I really ought to keep that as a surprise for you, my child ; but since it is you, I will not preserve secrecy. Listen :

“ Leave, O world, O leave me free !  
Snare me not with love's own gift.  
Leave my heart alone to lift  
Its own pain, its ecstasy.

“ Do you know who that is? I don't think you have ever heard the name although the book has been out two years already. The poems are just written for your arbour ; they really scarcely ought to be read in a room. And then there is another little volume—also more than two years old. Its contents may, perhaps, have no interest for you, but it is good for you to read the book. It gives one more backbone, and it is, I think, the most beautiful piece of German that has been written lately. ‘ My friends complain,’ it begins, ‘ that I so seldom speak for our deaf-mute Fatherland. Ah, they think I write as they do with pen and ink, but I write instead with my own life-blood and nerve-force. And I sometimes lack courage to impose this torture upon myself, sometimes lack the strength to bear it.’ ”

Hetty looked straight in front of her for a moment. “ Börne, isn't it, Börne? ”

“ Of course, Hetty ; who else could it be? You can hear that in a minute. And then I have put in as well the last two years of the *Annual of the Rhenish Muses*, with a few poems in it by Eichendorff, Prutz and Freiligrath. But these are only the light, delicate entrées. You will find more concentrated nourishment as well : the meaty goose breasts ”—pointing to the table ; “ the great fat slices of roast ”—pointing to another dish ; “ Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* and Balzac's *Cats Playing at Ball*. And as contrast, the lighter, more delicate dessert, so to speak ; as a last titbit



I commend to you Gandy's *Venetian Tales* and Eichendorff's *Castle Durande*." This was the longest speech that Uncle Jason had uttered that evening.

"I do not understand you," Aunt Rika began after a short pause—her unfailing introduction whenever she spoke to Jason, for she really never understood anything he said or did—"now, do you actually think Hetty will read all that? Besides, she will have something else to do out there in Charlottenburg. More than that, you really make Hetty quite stupid with all your mass of books!"

"Oh no, dear Aunt," interrupted the new cousin Julius, "you mustn't say that. Why shouldn't she read? I like reading too, like it very much, and I used to do a great deal. Now, of course, I haven't the time, but even I have brought with me books from our big lending library at home, close to the New Market. I know the man, so I bought them cheap there. Books, I tell you, Mademoiselle Hetty, that are not read in these days; I've got a whole box full of them in the inn—for I put up here at 'The Golden Buck.' Quite good books by Leibrock, Ritter and La Fontaine as well—all good books—and a whole row of the little Forget-me-not pocket series."

"Ah yes, those by Clauren?"

"I don't know, Herr Geybert, but the man spoke very highly of them to me. He said they would certainly be very instructive and interesting for me. And he must know them, of course; for, after all, they're his stock-in-trade."

"Of course, the man's information is quite correct."

"Perhaps, Fräulein, I might bring you out some of them to Charlottenburg. I will look out the best. And what shall I get for them, Fräulein?"

"Don't trouble," Hetty said, making a great effort to hide her indignation. "You see, I am sure that, for the present, I shall have enough to read, enough and to spare. If I am short of books I will apply to you—and not rob you of them just now."

"But, Fräulein Hetty, it makes no difference to

me. You would not rob me in the least. And I really don't know if I shall get any reading done now. I shall have a great deal to do, and a business man, even if he wished, cannot read books, however much he enjoys doing so." Uncle Jason began to fix his attention on the supper once more, for that seemed to him the only way to turn his energy into another channel.

"Forgive me, dear Aunt," the new cousin Julius began again after a short pause, "forgive me if I run away soon. But I should like to do a little more sightseeing. In Posen I was told so much about the Berlin night-life and warned to be sure not to miss it. I don't go in for such things as a rule but, as a stranger, I would like to get a sight of it. Where would it be best to go, Herr Geybert? To the Orpheus? Don't you think the Orpheus? I only ask for the sake of knowing."

Aunt Rika dropped her eyes to her plate, but Hetty laughed, quite unabashed:

"Now, Uncle Jason?"

"Unfortunately, most unfortunately, Herr Jacoby"—Jason stopped his occupation as if considering the matter—"I really cannot inform you, for Berlin night-life only exists for strangers coming from Posen. But—your pardon, ladies—the waiter, Karl, in 'The Golden Buck' has, I believe, a printed list of all the places that ought to be visited here to talk about in Posen. Hasn't he brought it to your room? Mark my words, Herr Jacoby, you'll find it, later on, by your tallow candle. If not, then just remind him of it; he'll give it to you for certain."

"Will he really?" Aunt Rika asked incredulously.

"Yes, don't you know that, then, Rika? And you have been almost thirty years in Berlin by now!"

"But, Jason, how should I get to know a thing like that?"

"Yes, but I've heard about it before now," came a somewhat saucy accompaniment from Hetty, who was nothing if not a true Geybert.



"I don't understand where you can hear such a thing, Hetty. Certainly nothing of the sort in this house."

The new cousin Julius—who was really no cousin at all—now got up to extort the list from waiter Karl at "The Golden Buck." And Jason expressed his regret that he had to go "so soon," but Aunt Rika said that she would not keep him, for a young man in Berlin—she felt the dignity now of living in the capital—could easily find more interesting and amusing society than hers.

She did not fail to ask him to come very soon and very often to Charlottenburg, and after assurances of their pleasure and satisfaction at the new acquaintance had been mutually exchanged, Aunt Rika saw him to the door and the new cousin really went.

"Now, Rika, I tell you if you are not back soon I shall feel it my duty to inform Solomon of the matter," Jason called after her in a significant tone.

But Rika, whose mind still ran on Demcke, replied: "Oh, don't, Jason; you know Solomon will be annoyed, and then he'll have to begin the treatment all over again."

"Now, Uncle," Hetty began, after a little pause, bending her head to lay one cheek against the bare arm whose elbow she had propped on the table and looking inquiringly into Jason's eyes as he sat opposite to her, "you have been greatly missed."

"By you?" queried Jason. And to himself he said: "Why is the lass so beautiful to-day, really strangely beautiful to-day?"

"Yes, Uncle—by me."

"Only by you? By nobody but you?"

"Yes, Uncle, by someone else as well."

"That I can well believe; Aunt Janey has been here already, Hetty."

"But we met quite by chance. Quite by chance—really, Uncle—and I was pleased to get a chance of saying good-bye to Dr. Kossling. For no doubt he would have come to see us in the next few days and

then would have found no one here. Afterwards we went in to Uncle Eli's for a minute as well. He called us in as we passed."

They had been to Uncle Eli's together? Uncle Jason didn't quite know what to say to that. He did not want to magnify the occurrence and so possibly endow it, in Hetty's eyes, with an importance it had lacked before: he realised there might be danger in that; on the other hand, he was equally reluctant to accept it as quite in the natural order of things. Moreover, he could not reconcile it with his conscience to sanction something that could only end badly. And lastly, he had far too high an opinion of Kossling to be able to say a word in his disfavour. All these considerations pressed upon him, and Jason grew quite hot with indecision and really did not know what to answer. "Oh yes," he replied at last, "it is true I haven't seen Kossling for quite a long time."

"I suppose he is much younger than you?"

"Fifteen years at least, Hetty, if not more."

"I am glad, you know, that you are such good friends in spite of that; I think it does you both credit."

"Well now, Hetty, I can't explain it to you quite like that. But I believe he will, some day, be something, something quite out of the common. He is made of the right stuff for that. And even if he shouldn't be anything special—and is it always our duty, I wonder, to be something special?—I like him because I see and discover in him what once was in me too, and because there is really more in him than I ever had; and because—do you understand?—he has a spiritual shyness with regard to all impressions, because really he is still a pure child, because everything has passed by him and only touched his skin, not sunk in any deeper. You see, he was quite poor as a boy, the son of some brassfounder or other—quite poor and always moving in circles above him; always sitting at festive boards, yet never getting a bite himself. But even that has left him unscathed. I believe



he is now well-off, compared with earlier days, and yet I know that sometimes, for weeks together, he lives in less comfort than a crossing-sweeper, perhaps only to buy himself a book that he thinks he must have."

As her uncle spoke, Hetty leant forward over the table and listened eagerly, as if she had to repeat every sentence and would incur a penalty for every missing verb or conjunction.

As Jason saw by Hetty's face that it had not been exactly wise of him to blow Kossling's trumpet, he passed—in thought at least—to the second subject of that evening as he asked:

"Well, Hetty, how do you like him? Come now!"

Hetty looked down at the table in much confusion, at the same time trying to give a simple ordinary judgment.

"He seems to me very modest and amiable," she answered after a pause.

"Modest and amiable? An arrogant ass, that's what he is!"

"But, Uncle, just now you were telling me, and now to say that of him!" Hetty was angry, really angry, and all the more beautiful for that.

"Charlotte Corday," Jason said to himself. "Good heavens, girl, whom do you mean? Kossling, of course? Kossling—always Kossling. I'm talking of your new cousin. What do you think he is?"

"Quite passable everyday stuff, Uncle. I fancy he'll make his way here in business."

"Of course this youth will make his way. That's just the annoying part of it, that a fellow like that gets on and afterwards thinks he's a marvel. He's the sort that comes here with a shilling in his pocket and forty years later rides in his carriage; the sort that gets a firm footing, marries a rich wife, and lets his money breed money like cats in May. Mark my words, if anyone asks your new cousin——"

"Why specially *my* cousin?"

"Sorry, but he is your cousin. He's no connection of mine. Well then, if anyone asks your

new cousin to-day where he comes from, he'll say: 'From Posen.' Won't he? He'll say that, I know. And if five years hence anyone asks him, he will say, certainly he is from Posen, but came to Berlin as quite a little chap, so could only dimly remember his native place. And if he is asked ten years hence he will answer by asking if they can't see he is a native of Berlin. By then he will be quite unable to imagine the possibility of anyone being born out of Berlin."

Hetty laughed. "You may be right, Uncle."

"And do you know where he comes from really? Why, from Benshen! Do you know Benshen? Well, I do. You must picture it something like this: the whole place just one street that you no sooner enter at one end than you are out of it at the other. There's only one danger to threaten you there; be sure and shut your eyes in Benshen and keep them tightly closed, or they'll steal away the very whites. The Löwenbergers are jokers compared with the Benshen folk. Of course this young man from Benshen will make his way; his sort come to Berlin like flies to a honey-pot."

Hetty did not quite take this view or, at any rate, would not own to it. She took up cudgels for the new cousin; he might turn out all right. But Jason would scarcely let her say a word—he couldn't explain the whole matter to her, nor would he, but he saw it from a different point of view.

In the midst of their heated argument in came Aunt Rika. "Quite right, Jason," she said as she opened the door and stood filling the doorway with her broad form and arms akimbo—"quite right, Jason, to give it Hetty; she has no business to do such things. It's not fitting for a well brought-up girl, Hetty."

And with this Aunt Rika stepped into the room, but she had not reached the table before Hetty had risen and gone—to their utter surprise—past her without a word, and out of the door, heedless of



Jason's protests and her aunt's attempts at pacification. She locked her room door, took out the key, and sat down in the dark on the edge of her bed. She was determined not to cry, but tears, great tears, dropped all unbidden, one by one, from her eyes and fell like heavy drops of warm rain upon her hands. The windows had been left open, and she was completely enveloped in the damp, dark night air and the heavy scent floating in from the walnut-tree. Everything, this dark night, the conversation just before, the afternoon with Kossling, all made her suddenly so strangely weary and unhappy. She felt as though her joints were all poured out like water ; as if her limbs were only a helpless weight, and she cried and cried in a self-pity she herself could not explain. At last she got up and went to the window ; everything was now wrapped in dark-blue night, and only by slow degrees could her eye distinguish the distant roofs and the top of the tree standing out against the blue-black ground. Slowly, too, there appeared through the heavy mist one or two stars, trembling and flickering like bright pin-points, now here, now there. So far no one had come from the other room to fetch Hetty back ; she could only hear a loud excited conversation between her aunt and Uncle Jason, without being able to distinguish any separate words. She pressed her forehead against the panes and lost herself in daydreams where everything was what she liked and desired. She had always had a gift for that. When anything went amiss she took refuge in a world of dreams and longings where all that happened fulfilled, and more than fulfilled, her every wish.

At last Uncle Jason came and knocked at the door. Why was she stopping there in the dark ?—he wanted to say good night. And her aunt came too, to excuse herself and explain she had not meant anything by what she said.

But Hetty was not inclined to show her tear-stained face and did not open the door. She had to pack,

she said, and did her best to speak brightly and frankly. Besides, she had already taken off some of her things, so that she could not appear again.

And then she heard how Uncle Jason went slowly down the steps and how her aunt barred the front door.

"Hetty," Aunt Rika begged once more, "do open your door."

Hetty quickly struck a light, lit her candle, and opened the door.

Her aunt came in slowly, sat down on a chair, and looked irresolutely at Hetty, who had again taken up her position on the edge of the bed, nor did Aunt Rika seem to notice that Hetty was still quite fully dressed. "Now let me sit here for a bit, Hetty," she began. "You see, you are always like this in a minute. I didn't want you to take it like that. Of course I know you didn't mean any harm, but it isn't done. Don't you understand people see you and it will be bad for you? You think it won't, but I tell you it will. What's the result? Gossip and scandal, I tell you. And now tell me something. What purpose is there in it? What's the good of it, and where will it lead to?"

As Hetty did not answer—for her thoughts indeed were far away—Aunt Rika took her silence as agreement, so she got up, went over to Hetty and stroked her cheek.

"There, you see, I knew quite well you were reasonable."

Hetty, unused as she was to such marks of favour from Aunt Rika, was so astonished and delighted at the caress that she even took her aunt's hand in hers and stroked and fondled it. That did her good, for indeed how small she felt all at once, helpless as a little child. "Well, Hetty, now you must pack your things. Shall you really take all those books of Jason's with you? And I must just look to my own packing once more. Good night." She turned round again as she went. "Now see, ever since



you have been in this house you have been a joy to us, and Heaven forbid it should be anything else until, with God's help, you leave us as a bride."

Hetty was left alone; the last words had shown her that her aunt's tenderness had not been purely unpremeditated, an impulsive mark of heartfelt affection, but had been shown at the right place, after careful calculation.

But now Hetty's oppression and sadness were all gone, utterly disappeared, as if carried away on the wings of the wind, and in her sudden light-heartedness she trilled away like a bird in a tree; she opened and shut drawer after drawer, and spread out everything neatly on the table—hair-nets, combs, hair-pins, ribbons, lace handkerchiefs, bead-embroidered reticules, sunshade, long gloves, the high-heeled grey low boots, the little box with letter paper, the plated travelling writing-case from Uncle Jason, the agate ornaments—and Heaven knows all else. And, as she did so, she sang alone songs that really were not at all the kind for her—as, for instance, Nante's as he takes his watch to the pawnshop and "*Combien je regrette*," which she had heard Jason sing—sang them so loud that at last Aunt Rika called to her that the night-watchman would come up if she did not stop soon.

And for a long, long time no sleep would come to Hetty as she lay there, as gay as if some marvel of marvels had happened, and again and again she sent out her thoughts far afield to have them come back all laden with rare riches.

\* \* \* \* \*

Outside it was a warm sultry night; a night when the sap rose in every living plant and the last buds on the trees burst into leaf, when men's blood ran hot and they were attracted by any fluttering skirt of which they caught but a distant glimpse in the darkness; a night apparently full of mysterious voices and adventures, a night when the gas lamps in

König Street flickered but feebly, as if they owned her right to be for to-day, just for to-day, sole and absolute ruler.

Jason had no wish to go home yet to his house up in Kloster Street, where a little old housekeeper looked after him and his large bright rooms. No, he did not want to go there yet, and was equally unwilling to spend the next few hours in some drinking-shop or restaurant, so he went up and down König Street, loitered and strolled along, slowly and aimlessly, now alone with his thoughts and now following for a time some loving couple, to listen to their talk as far as he could catch it. Or he even steered his course after some rustling gown, not with any intention of forming a new acquaintance, but simply attracted by the perfume and by the charm that lies in a silent invitation, so much more subtle and delicate than can be found in the clumsy words of any open greeting. As he walked, his thoughts worked as busily as the sails of any wind-driven mill. Sometimes he was at home, sometimes with Julius in the Orpheus, sometimes talking with Hetty and Kossling, or living once more portions of his later experiences, but certainly most often of all in silent talk with Kossling.

And when under a far-distant lamp he saw a man standing, flourishing a thin little walking-stick wildly and furiously in the air, as if shaking it in the whole world's face, he was sure that it could be none other than Kossling.

Kossling, however, had walked straight home; that is, he could not have said whether he had walked, driven or flown. And at home he had, first of all, sat half an hour before the white cloth of his supper-table and looked at the ham, the sausage, the bread and butter with such astonished curiosity as if he saw them to-day for the very first time.

Then, when his landlady came in to clear away and asked if it had not been to his liking perhaps, he had assured her with a kindly smile that he thought



the weather heavenly, nor had he the least idea why the dignified old lady made such a noisy exit at his answer. Then he had taken Goethe's poems from the bookcase and wondered what was the old gentleman's object in writing such disconnected, senseless stuff when he might certainly have devoted his long life to some more useful occupation. Later on in his solitary game of chess—a means of distraction that, at other times, never failed him—immediately after E2—E4, E7—E5, he had swept his men off with such impatience that they rolled away to the farthest corners of the room—and had, at last, taken his stand at the window, turned his back on the room's half-darkness and fixed his eyes on the sky, still light with its pale green and white behind the poplars, whilst from overhead a thick warm mantle of blue darkness came slowly down like some protecting hand to set free all that was burdened and oppressed, all secret unfulfilled desires. And now Kossling had been for a full hour and a half rushing through the streets like a blind madman—now when flourishing his cane he ran straight into Jason Geybert's arms.

“Halloa!” Jason called out gaily, “what's the matter, Doctor? You are surely thinking of taking up this very day the post of fencing-master at the University. But stop for a moment, I beg of you, your sublime career.”

“Herr Jason Geybert, is it surely? Do I meet the master here? At home he is seldom to be found; at Steheli's never.”

Jason Geybert laughed. “Now tell me, Doctor, what has happened? You too seem to be somewhat on the prowl to-day. So what is the news? Has your epoch-making iambic drama *Clotilde von Helfenstein* been accepted? Or has your allowance from home been doubled? Or—what else is it?”

“Oh no, Herr Geybert,” Kossling said, planting himself with legs apart in front of Uncle Jason. The worthy Clotilde lies still in deep slumber on the other side of nowhere; but as regards the increase

in allowance you are not entirely wrong. Only it consists of that excellent sum which always remains the same whether counted in copper, silver, or gold, or doubled, trebled, or multiplied a hundredfold. No, I rejoice at meeting you, for I was thinking of strewing ashes on my head and smiting my breast because I thought you had sailed sans adieux to the island of Cythera."

"Yes," answered Jason, chuckling to himself, "but the worst of it is that we always find ourselves back in this world again. But, Kossling, am I really the sole cause of your cuts and tierces, your feints and thrusts?"

Kossling was somewhat taken aback. "Almost," he answered; and then, as if just remembering quite an indifferent matter: "Stop though—I was to give you someone's love."

"I would not use such ordinary words, so shall we simply say someone of feminine gender?"

"However do you know that?"

"Now, how do you think, Kossling?"

"From her Uncle Eli?"

"No."

"Then from your sister-in-law, of course?"

"Not that either."

"Then perhaps from the lady herself?"

"Look at that now; what a clever guess to be sure; you met my niece Hetty to-day, Kossling, by accident, quite by accident; she told me so."

"Yes; just think how lucky I was," Kossling exclaimed in a voice certainly loud enough to be heard on the other side of the street, and Jason, in spite of the darkness, saw how his eyes lit up with joy.

Well then, their meeting had been accidental, entirely accidental—that was what he wanted to know, and he was now satisfied. What could he possibly say against it? He was glad, too, it was so, for he would have found his rôle a difficult one under any other circumstances.



"Well, Kossling, what do you propose doing for the rest of the day? Are you going home to finish your poem *Celestine*?—

"My maiden *Celestine*,  
With gay and roguish mien,  
Hear, how thine Edgar calls!

"Do I look like that?"

"Then to Drucker's, Louis Drucker's, Doctor."

"Too noisy for me to-day, dear Herr Geybert. I want to be quiet. Is there nowhere out of doors where we can discuss literature and the eternities?"

"Stop!—I know, I know;" and Jason Geybert took Kossling's arm and marched him off into the warm darkness of the spring night, singing as he went one of his own paraphrases of the air in *Don Juan*, whilst Kossling walked along in silent happiness.

And when the two had got to the corner of Kloster Street a great vehicle tightly packed with a gay company of young men and women drove past them.

It was utterly impossible to tell how many were really in and on the coach, all squeaking, gabbling, grunting as they were. Jason answered the jokes cast at him with others quite as broad, for he was rather proud of the way he could tackle impertinence, and was in his element in any gay frolic. As he looked up, however, he saw on the box, wedged in between the driver and a tall red-haired person in a pale-blue cotton frock—saw to his astonishment and his delight—the new cousin Julius, who was really no cousin at all.

He had stuck a wine-bottle on the end of his walking-stick and was waving it in the air, at the same time bawling at the top of his voice.

"Kossling! Kossling! Hetty is quite right, quite right; he'll make his way, and he has certainly got the list from the waiter."

"What's that about Hetty, what's that?"

"Oh, come now—that's family business;" and Jason Geybert dragged him on.

And now he had got as far as *Armida* in his repertoire of songs.

Frau Konnecke's house had but six windows in its breadth, and was one-storied only, with a sloping brown roof with broad curves, out of which peeped the round black eyes of the garret windows. The house was quite overshadowed by trees; first came four rows of old limes that, at this season, with their broad fanlike leaves of limp green silk paper still let through the sun's rays and allowed them to paint a golden network on the gravel path. These great trees, with their black trunks and yellow-green foliage, looking down with pity on the little house, came first, and then behind the green wooden fence and creaking gate lay the little front garden, wild, cramped and overgrown.

Lilac-bushes and laburnum-trees leant against the house-wall as if they wanted to push it out of the way with their shoulders, and the hawthorn hedges ran along as if they really must look in at the windows and not let anything that happened inside escape their notice. And even if you went up the few steps to the little wooden platform and roof that formed a tiny place to wait and rest outside the front door your feet were brushed by branches of privet. The tiny grass plots, the little black border full of hyacinths, and the fat globe-shaped mirror that wherever you stood gave the reflection of a miniature wilderness under a sky of blue—all these were entirely shut in by bushes that seemed to allow them standing room on sufferance only.

On the left-hand side Frau Konnecke lived with her host of children. Her husband had long since been purely legendary. Had he died yesterday or ten years ago? Was he coming back that very evening? No one heard a word about him.

On the right of the door the Geyberts had rented the two front and the one back room, with the kitchen belonging to them and an attic for the maid.

Hetty's window looked straight on to the hyacinth



bed and the mirror-globe. The walls of her room were coloured blue with a silver band along the top, the window-frames were white and hung with neatly looped-up muslin curtains, and in the corner stood a round white plaster stove. Yet it was impossible to think that anyone could use the room in the winter. The little place was so exactly fitted for the spring with its scanty furniture of polished birch wood ; in the spring it was filled with the chirping and twittering of the birds right up to the corner by the stove, and the walls seemed to have caught some of the brightness of the sky's delicate blue.

In summer, when the foliage was darker, thicker, and more luxuriant, then the room was just the spot for pleasant meditation and retirement, and the blue walls seemed to breathe out silent, cool refreshment. In autumn, when the foliage was thin and scanty, hanging yellow, brown and purple in the blue air, even then a few forgotten dreams of the singing of birds seem to have taken refuge here ; but in winter when every post puts on a snow cap, when the bushes hold with thousands of delicate fingers the soft white flakes caught by the boughs and branches, and when white roof and white sky meet in a never-ending embrace, then the thought—and the thought alone—of this bright blue room with its silver line and its yellow birch furniture is enough to make one cold and sad.

But this was not the case with the aunt's room adjoining. This was a really cosy winter corner, with its two windows, its dark mahogany furniture, the rich tone of terra-cotta on the walls and the brightly painted scrolls over both beds—Bacchantes playing with panthers—a symbolism that certainly seemed somewhat out of place here. And then across the hall was the room looking out to the back, with simple, white walls, a few high-backed chairs, a table, a dresser, and some china in a corner cupboard. Here Hetty and her aunt had their meals. It was never really light, but bathed all spring and summer in the

pale-green shade of the broad-leaved chestnuts that grew in the courtyard and tapped the window-panes with their branches. Not until autumn, when the summer visitors had gone, did the floor, ceiling and walls escape from this close green veil to shiver in the white light that filtered through the bare black branches, whilst in the evenings the red sky peeped through their clearly marked network into the quiet little room.

But it was not for these few rooms that anyone came to Charlottenburg—to Frau Konnecke—especially to Frau Konnecke; they were only an extra, a decent shelter for nights and for rainy days. Nor did the house in any way give itself the airs of a Berlin dwelling which, however small it was, always proclaimed: “Here I am.” No, no, there it stood, so lost in dreams and so silent with its draped white curtains amidst all the green that surrounded it on every side. The limes by the front door and the chestnuts in the courtyard at the back extended their arms across the roof, and stretched out friendly hands to each other.

It was for the garden in front, the courtyard, the long narrow back garden, and for these alone, that visitors came here. A few wooden steps led straight into the back garden so to speak, for even the courtyard was full of chestnut-trees with their great smooth black trunks that so soon ended in inviting leafy crowns. Now as Hetty came out—although it was but very few days since the buds had cast off their dark sticky covering—they were already lifting their broad, green fingers to the sun, and the stiff brown flower stalks were dotted over with little white knobs that would develop, on the morrow maybe, into white candles, to shine with a strangely dreamy light amongst the green on the long spring evenings and far into the night itself.

It was hard to say where the court ended and the garden began; a low hedge and then nothing but green. There was even a little hill as well as inter-



secting paths twisting and turning in curves and round corners; the garden boasted, too, three or four arbours hidden away under hawthorns and wild prunus; acacias and elms, ash-trees and maples, spread their branches in friendly comradeship overhead. And even nightingales poured forth their notes in the overgrown bushes that bounded the adjoining land.

When Hetty sat in the summer-house the finches came and pecked between the planks of the wooden floor, and if she looked up by chance she would be sure to catch sight of some dark thrush on the path with a long worm twisting and turning in his beak. The thrush, however, did not trouble about that, but stood there meditating for all the world like some old philosopher. That is the kind of garden it was.

But this was by no means all, for beyond the high tree-tops, beyond the cool shade, only crossed here and there by sunny streaks of light, lay the orchard with its tiny narrow paths, where the raspberry-canecanes peeped into Hetty's face and the gooseberry-bushes laid detaining fingers on her skirt, where the strawberry plants crept over the beds with their luxuriant leaves close round the old knotted trunks, split and gummy, of the fruit-trees that grew there, short, crooked, bent, but sending far and wide boughs laden with fruit-buds into the constant flood of sunshine.

They were now in full blossom; the peach, indeed, was nearly over, and dropping clouds of rosy blossoms that edged every path with a line of tender pink petals. The cherry-trees stretched up their arms, sturdy and stout as any man's, to pour forth a blessing on every side from its branches covered with pure white blossoms like dazzling silver. And plums, apples and pears were only just beginning, timidly putting out from dark boughs and scanty leaves tiny knobs and buds, tinted white, or palest pink and blue.

In the orchard little spots could be found where everything but blossom disappeared, where you would

never guess that such things as houses, green trees or streets existed ; where you could only see blue sky crossed and touched by blossoming boughs ; where the only sounds left of this world were the humming of the bees, the flight of a butterfly, and the chirp in an old pear-tree of a little tit husband and wife.

That was the kind of orchard this was!

But if Hetty walked to the end of it she came to a hedge and wooden fence. On the other side of these lay a sandy road with deep cart-ruts, and beyond, a different world ; damp, yellow meadows and fields of black, heavy soil, stretching down to the Spree, that crept lazily along in wide curves between low-lying marshes and tiny woods, until it was lost to sight behind the luxuriant foliage of the Castle Park and the old poplars on its opposite bank.

Here, in this garden, Hetty was sole and absolute ruler. Here, for hours together, she could walk along the paths or sit in the wooden summer-house to read, knit, sing her soft song, or do nothing—and only need to move a little to one side when the sun shone on her book. Hetty did not shun her fellows, but she did not need them, and was quite happy without their company. Here she was quite undisturbed by them, safe indeed from every noise. The children played in the courtyard, and the trees and bushes softened and intercepted the sound of their voices. Frau Konnecke herself only entered the garden in the very early morning and late afternoon to hoe, rake and water ; she hated the garden indeed, because it made more work for her, and in her eyes a branch of cherry blossom was no revelation of the beauty everywhere, but only a promise of harvest and expectation of a silver groschen in the future.

For the stout, worthy Frau Konnecke was, to hear her speak, a jewel amongst women, but in reality greedy of gain, scratching and scraping like any hen for every farthing.

Hetty was not disturbed in her self-chosen solitude



by even her aunt, who never entered the garden, although she told everyone, at great length, of its wonders. In the mornings she took the coach to Berlin whenever it went, for she had long wanted to buy a new wrap, and had been for weeks on the look-out for this calf with five legs. But since the circle of Berlin shops that she could still enter on this errand without meeting with an unpleasant reception grew daily smaller and smaller, there was, at any rate, some prospect of an end to these morning journeys to town. But it was quite impossible to hazard any opinion as to when her afternoon excursions would cease, for then she alternated between Muskov's Coffee Gardens, the Turkish Tent, Madame Pauli's, and even The Tents and The Court Huntsman simply to hear music and to see folk as she knitted and drank a cup of coffee. She felt she must see people—lots of people, both friends and strangers. She could not endure even a single day when she did not, at least once, hear the buzz and movement of the crowded streets—it was a necessity for her—and a necessity, too, if Hetty accompanied her, to talk behind the back of every passer-by, and to subject his walk, dress, previous life and finances to criticism. This she did with a shrewd loquacity which at first was amusing, but when endlessly continued became deadly wearisome. But as soon as Hetty stayed at home and Aunt Rika had no one else to whom she could confide her criticisms, then she faithfully stored them up in her memory, and when she got home, filled to overflowing with news and little incidents, she would not rest nor go to bed until she had relieved her mind to Hetty about the newest gown of strawberry lustre with three wide Russian green flounces that she had seen Janey Simon wearing, although in her opinion she might have had something better to do.

At first, too, Hetty was but seldom disturbed by acquaintances, for scarcely anyone came out from Berlin yet, and it was still too early in the year for summer lodgings.

Jason never made his appearance, and only sometimes wrote a few lines to Hetty, assuring her how hard at work he was in the business, and at the same time declaring that he would like to come out, but that his spare time was so extraordinarily taken up by new studies, although the nature of these new studies he did not confide to his niece Hetty.

Uncle Solomon wrote from Karlsbad long cheerful letters in his clear business hand with the beautiful long s's of which he was so proud. He was one of those people who let themselves go whenever they write letters, so that in his, his old temperament re-appeared, and he showed that ready wit and cleverness which, in the course of his long married life, had taken to themselves wings, or at any rate never ventured to appear if he but scented his wife within thirty feet of him.

Mail-day was a festival for the two in Charlottenburg, and Aunt Rika never failed to take the letter with her in the afternoon, on the chance of reading it to any acquaintance she might happen to meet. For it was her nature in public to laud to the skies what at home she criticised and belittled—and possibly she really was proud of it. Everything went on as usual in Janey's establishment, only Wolfgang looked very pale and had a cough, so that perhaps he ought to begin at once and come out for Saturdays and Sundays to them in Charlottenburg, but they would wait another week and see. It was Ferdinand's busiest time now, and everything was very brisk.

The new cousin Julius had soon left "The Golden Buck" and gone to respectable people in Kloster Street to look round for a suitable site for his new business, but could find none in wretched Berlin. Whilst waiting he was making himself a little useful in the firm of Solomon Geybert & Co., and Jason, in his letters, spoke of him as a quick and cautious young man, a testimonial which, however flattering to the new cousin, yet said nothing of his business efficiency.

But of Kossling Hetty heard nothing!



Outside, Spring was coming. Those who lived in Berlin indeed only saw her outriders and stray messengers, but the two in Charlottenburg had her in person with all her smiles and blossoms. No sooner did Hetty feel that Spring could really offer no more, nor add anything fresh to her wealth of beauty, the very next morning she brought an apronful of new surprises, like the attentive, indefatigable lover that she was. To begin with, she had offered tiny blue flowers amongst the withered leaves in the shade of the summer-house ; then suddenly they were whisked away, to be replaced by luxuriant growth of green foliage, and though the few patches of white anemones—blushing a rosy pink as if they found the sun too warm—soon disappeared, in their stead the shining, curled leaves of the lilies of the valley pushed up every day a little higher.

And the gooseberries had barely lost their blossoms when others were hanging on the currant-bushes. Then came the little red-tipped honeysuckle and the lilac sheltering against the house in her violet frock, and between these—a few days after the first—tempted by a moist warm evening air, the stiff laburnum stems put out waving, fluttering, yellow flags in its golden chains of hanging blossom. And as if there was still not enough colour, the chestnuts in the yard and away over the house and its sloping roof of brown tiles, lit up their candles that threw their white radiance far into the night, and the red hawthorn in the garden, with its old twisted stems, away on the edge of the orchard, drew down from the sky above the most fiery of the sunset clouds to wrap around its branches.

Every day something new came, and every day something old disappeared, quite unnoticed, as a guest slips away from a gay gathering and it is not till hours later that someone says : “ Why, surely he must have gone.”

To-day the lilac-bushes that sent out clouds of perfume into Hetty’s room seemed to have opened their last sprays, but to-morrow it was evident that

only then were they quite enveloped in blossoms, and that yesterday they had but worn a thin blue embroidered garment. And further, when they tossed their little blue stars in handfuls on the path, the side entrance, the wooden steps, they showed no thinning of their abundant blossoms, only the colour of the bushes faded slowly from the deep blue of violets to the pale pinkish blue of half-faded forget-me-nots.

And the quiet blue days were followed by long yearning evenings, when the sun set reluctantly and for hours and hours after the sky was still bright and patterned with a strange play of colour; often it was bridged by long banks of red clouds, or again crossed by quite narrow lines that stood stiff and motionless in the sea-green ether, to disappear at last, to fade into nothing, their going and coming alike mysterious. And at no hour of the night were the tops of the trees lost in the darkness overhead, all their shape hidden in night's enveloping mantle, as they were after the sultry summer days. No, whenever Hetty went to her window again a strange undefined light like a bright edge still lay over every tree, and only above and beyond that the arch of night's dark sky with its weary, fading stars.

And very early, with the first white light, long before the sun himself appeared, the birds grew lively in trees and hedges, and wakened Hetty with the gay chorus of their voices. The finches from the lime-tree and the thrush that had his home over in the next garden on the top of a dark arbor-vitæ, the oriole creeping through the gardens, the sparrows on the roof, and the starlings on the lawn—one and all in the first weeks drove sleep far from Hetty's eyes with their unwonted music in heaven's earliest dawn. Indeed, to begin with, they even roused her from her bed and brought her to the window in her white cap and bedjacket, refreshed and yet a little chilled by the cool damp morning air striking against her skin, still warm from sleep, to listen for no short time as they greeted and answered each other in all their varying



notes and tones from this side and that, from here and there, from the chestnuts in the court at the back, from all the different gardens and bushes. But as weeks went on she only heard their outpourings as in a dream, in a light pale slumber under a thin coverlet. And at last she grew to wonder why the birds would no longer sing as loud as once they did to awaken her heart with their gay notes. But changed times had come by then.

Two, three Sundays came and went. Each came with a quiet morning peace, somehow different from other days, though no one could quite say how. But even the doves sitting on the roof, preening their feathers, seemed to know instinctively that this day was not the same as yesterday or the day before. And the Sundays went in the noise and dust of crowds of Sunday visitors and excursionists pouring back in an overwhelming stream to the Brandenburg Gate from public gardens, coffee-rooms, the Castle Park and the heath. A wide chain of gigs, landaulettes, broad victorias, tilburys, public coaches, and spring-carts crept slowly along the high road in a cloud of dust. And alongside of them, almost keeping up with the horses, flowed a gay stream of foot-passengers. How they shouted and laughed, calling out to one and another ; and many a rich man driving in his carriage came in for an impudent or rough remark from the walkers, and had to accept it with the best grace he could. Whole groups of them sang new street songs, such as *The Pot o' Beans* or the one about the broth. The men smoked long Virginia cigars, and soldiers in any number marched along with their cook sweethearts in their shawls and shady hats as fine as any ladies ; mothers of families pushed perambulators in front of them, whilst the fathers did their best to keep in some sort of order girls in flounced outstanding petticoats, carrying their cresset lanterns in careful little hands, and boys with their waving paper flags.

There seemed no end, literally no end to them,

until, at last, when the evening shadows were growing very long, the stream became less and less full and gradually dribbled away, until in the end the whole world had reverted to its state in the Garden of Eden, and humanity was only to be found in couples, in the hundreds of lovers walking along in the shelter of the limes.

Hetty watched from her window how they avoided, as far as they could, the scanty light of the oil lamps, and hastened past to reach once more the purple darkness, where they thought their tender embraces would escape unnoticed by curious eyes.

And then, when at last all was quiet once more, and Hetty went to bed on these Sundays, she was depressed and sad to tears, although she could not have said why.

She was anxious to make a journey now to the town, to the business, to visit Jason, from whom she hoped to hear something of Dr. Kossling. But she would be afraid to ask Jason, and did not know whether he would begin to speak of Kossling unasked. Then, too, in these days of blossom out in the country, Hetty was overcome by such a feeling of lethargy that it was hard to make up her mind to any decisive step. Nor had she any longing for Berlin; the most she ever did was to go as far as the Tents and catch sight through the trees of the distant Brandenburg Gate. At other times she only went with her book to the Castle Park, and in some strange mood sought the little official's house, standing silent and golden amid the dark yew-trees. Or she would wander slowly round the pond, right and left along the shady narrow paths amongst the bushes on its banks, and at last sit down where the little bell for the fish hung on the railing, on the bench with its back covered with initials, names and hearts. For read what book she might, Hetty could never keep her thoughts fixed on it for long, but away they soon went, dancing and fluttering in the distance like the stray white butterflies that she saw in the sun-



shine visiting the kingcups on the surface of the dark waters, only to hover over some pale blossom looking up from its dark sunlit home before it went farther afield once more.

Such beautiful quiet sunny days these were, yet entirely filled with a quiver of suppressed excitement. Hetty could not remember such ever before in her life; everything seemed entirely changed. She often tried to compare these days with those she had spent here in earlier times—for this was not the first stay she had made out here—but she could not remember anything about them, not a thing. They were as if wiped out of her memory; all that remained was the present day and hours with their hidden possibilities and their quiver of suppressed excitement. . . .

One morning there had fallen a few heavy drops of rain through the warm, damp air, and everything by the wayside or in the garden stood revelling in the refreshing moisture.

Aunt Rika, who could not endure Charlottenburg in the wet, had driven to her sister Janey's in the town. One driver always took her for less, because she drove so often and, as he said, because he wanted to keep her custom. So for to-day Hetty was sole mistress of house and garden.

She was sitting at her window above the lilacs, whose sweet scent flooded her room and cast many a glance at the dripping limes, from which little balls of water, impelled by their own weight, alone rolled slowly down from branch to branch and from leaf to leaf, until at last they splashed on to the sand below. Hetty was busy with beadwork for the front of a handbag which she had almost finished. A border encircled a bank on which sat a shepherdess in a yellow dress; at her side stood a blue shepherd, and behind them a green round tree-stump. It was almost quite finished, even to the grey background of sky. It was only the right-sized pink beads for the lady's mouth and the black for her eyes that

Hetty could not find. For half an hour already she had poked about with her fine needle in the cardboard box on the window-ledge in front of her, holding up to the light such a pink or black little bead, only to find it unworthy and to let it drop back to its brothers in the box. And as she was examining the tenth bead, only to find it too big—for a shepherdess could not have a mouth like a cheapjack or a market salesman—she chanced to look over the little bit of pink glass and saw someone far off coming up the path, right away under the trees. Then an unexpected movement of Hetty's hand dropped the cover with the beads, that scattered all over the floor and hopped away into every corner ; indeed, many of them were quite unable to stop, and rolled like mad things up and down between the boards. And as Hetty stooped down to get them she grew hotter and hotter with the blood running into her head. As she had no wish to appear with a red face, she decided to let beads be beads, and took her stand by the open window. And there was Kossling at the garden gate, casting very doubtful glances at the little house and uncertain whether he should ring or not. He was quite sunburnt, flushed with walking, and Hetty had to be the first to call out. "Yes, Doctor," she cried, and her voice had quite regained its firm, gay notes, "this is really where you want to come if I am not mistaken."

Heavens above, how Kossling started!

"Ah, there you are, Fräulein Hetty ; the whole way I have been afraid you would not be at home. Perhaps you might just have driven into Berlin, for I am not one of the luckiest as a rule."

"Are you going to stay out there all the time, Doctor?"

"A little longer ; you are standing in such a charming frame of lilacs and laburnums, Fräulein Hetty ; at home we have a picture of a girl standing at the window feeding a bird, and that is just what you look like. I have just seen it again!"



"When were you at home, then, Doctor?"

"Just lately—only a couple of weeks ago—I wanted—well, I'll tell you that later."

"Is Frau Geybert at home too?"

"She is in Berlin."

"Oh, what a pity!" And the exclamation came from his heart. "Won't you come out, then, for a little and let us go into the Castle Park together?"

"Why won't you come in, then?"

"Well, do you think I might?"

"I will consider and weigh this matter carefully. This room is my most sacred domain, and not to be entered by you—the dining-room is neutral ground for quite a short stay, and the garden is in the same category as the Castle Park. If, however, you wish to visit the latter, I am at your service as guide, for I know it by heart in and out."

Whilst she was speaking Kossling had entered the garden, and still stood in shy hesitation on the little wooden steps leading to the door. Up above, Frau Konnecke's ample form appeared in the vicinity of a window as the lady pressed an inquiring nose against the panes.

To the accompaniment of a double peal—for under the plank in the wooden floor outside the door there was a treacherous bell, and the opening of the door also set going another shrill ring-a-ting, ting—Hetty and Kossling advanced towards each other in the half-dark passage that was only crossed by the bright rays that filtered in from the window at the back. And with the opening of the door all the sultry heat of a damp spring afternoon penetrated in a moment into the cool quietness of the house.

Hetty stretched out her hand to Kossling; neither of them really knew what to do next, and it was only the rattling at the peep-hole in the white door leading to the kitchen domains that made them both start.

"I thought you would come before this."

"Oh, did you think so? Yes, yes, and I really

meant to—you see that, don't you? But I thought if I came at once I should be in the way. And then I rushed home, helter-skelter all of a sudden. I wanted to write, of course—and I have written, too, several times—but then I didn't send it off, as I didn't know if you would like it."

"Why shouldn't I like it?" asked Hetty, with a slight flush and quiet smile that held Kossling's eyes as if by magic.

Good heavens, how beautiful the girl was, with all the charm of a summer's day! She wore her abundant hair in three thick plaits, her shoulders were bare under an openwork tippet with a narrow edging of swansdown, and her gown quite simple with its close-fitting bodice and full outstanding skirt of bright French lawn, with narrow violet stripes that trembled in all their length at every one of Hetty's movements.

"Where shall we go?" Hetty asked. "Doctor, will you enter our summer residence—or shall we go straight into the garden?"

"Which would you prefer, Fräulein Hetty? I would like to go straight to the garden."

"Good, I will fetch my hat," Hetty said, and went. Then back she came with a little bag in her hand and her straw hat hanging by its strings of broad violet ribbon from her arm.

"Did you see in the front how full of flower my lilac still is? There is not another in the road that has kept in bloom so long. At night, when the windows are shut, it literally makes one's head ache.

As they stepped out into the courtyard the broad chestnut leaves rattled and drummed each quite independently, and the sun breaking through the clouds dried with a laugh the moisture from the edges of the shining leaves.

"Look, the garden begins here and goes right far back. Here is my summer-house. Shall we sit down for a little now or wait till later? But, Doctor, you must tell me something!"

What should he tell her, then? On his way here



he had known all he meant to say, the whole time he had been talking to Hetty so intently that, in the Zoological Gardens, he had all but run down an old gentleman. For weeks he had spoken to no one but her, and now he could not utter a single syllable.

He had not had the slightest intention of coming here ; he had meant, indeed, not to see her again ; he had only gone out for a walk, and now, here he was in the garden by her side, quite alone with her, and only the voices of the birds surrounded them from the wet glistening bushes.

He had not meant to see her again ; he had gone home to find out if there was any place for him, and then he would come back a different man. But things had not turned out so ; he had avoided everything that reminded him of her, he had not once been to see Jason, who had twice even sent a street messenger to him with a mock sentimental note, and yet, at every hour of the day, she had been his only companion—and now he was actually walking by her side once more.

“ No, you tell me first and then I will begin. What is your uncle doing ? ”

“ He has been in Karlsbad and is quite well again. To-day he is to be in Leipzig, where he has some business, and next week he is coming back. I am looking forward to that, for though I cannot say I get on badly with Aunt Rika, yet I feel more attracted by Uncle. Women really always have too many bad qualities.”

“ I couldn't say that.”

“ Yes, yes, they have. Taken all through, I think they are inferior in character to men.”

“ But not you,” Kossling said as solemnly as if taking an oath.

“ Now, Doctor, why should I alone be different from the others ? ”

“ I do not know, Fräulein Hetty, and I never try to find out. I only know that you are. Every miracle is lost when we begin to try to find a solution ; we

must just accept it." The serious way in which Kossling said this amused Hetty.

"Yes, now you are laughing, but you know if I were not firmly convinced that you . . ." Here he broke off.

"What then?"

But Kossling was not to be persuaded to express his further thoughts, and so for a little time they both walked in silence under the dripping trees, along the paths that now and again showed broad patches of bright, hot sunshine. On little patches of grass and in the damp withered leaves under the bushes, thrushes gathered in numbers in search of the plentiful worms venturing out of the wet earth, and the big dark birds only stopped in their occupation to look after the two with half-mistrustful, half-angry glances, as if asking why they came there to disturb them.

The rain had brought down a whole cloud of white acacia blossoms and swept them to the edge of the paths in broad lines of foam, and now, when the moisture had all been drunk by the thirsty soil, they lay there, every calyx still holding its drop of water. And fresh blossoms were continually dropping into the bushes, on to the grass, besprinkling the path with silver sparks that might have been blown over from some distant fireworks.

If you looked up high, you could see the tops of the trees heavy with their weight of white blossoms, standing out like white clouds between the green limes and elms on a sky of marvellous clear bright blue, just that pure shade only to be seen on such a late spring afternoon, when earth and sky have been cleansed by showers of rain.

Hetty and Kossling walked on side by side under the tall trees out into the orchard, where the pink and white blossoms had long since been lost in the wealth of shining foliage, and only one old pear-tree still showed a few late white buds amongst its green leaves. But instead, the ground was strewn with starry white strawberry flowers, looking up bright-eyed into the blue



above ; indeed, they were just as white as the few strange little circles of snowy cloud taking their radiant way across the sky in gay unconcern.

Between the beds the paths were so narrow that Hetty and Kossling had to walk one behind the other. The gooseberry-bushes and the slender, swaying raspberry-canecanes seized hold of Hetty's skirts, so that she drew them closely together round her ankles. Kossling walked behind her, just in her footsteps, and through the open edges of her shawl he could see—marked out in little pink portions—Hetty's broad, queenly shoulders and the spring of her neck ; he could not tear his eyes from these bright patterns, and her skin, like living mother-of-pearl, struck him as akin to the proud petals on the pear-tree's curved branches.

All this delicate fresh beauty of garden and spring-tide was to him but an embodiment of Hetty herself. Every tree, every bush, the trellis-work, the ivy-covered wall bounding the next garden, the dark recesses of the summer-house, the distance, with its rows of trees beyond the yellow meadows—all this was only created to set off Hetty's beauty as she passed along in her light dress, stepping so lightly, so proud and incomparable—her head thrown back a little, like all the Geyberts. As they walked, Kossling had already taken her hand once—he did not know himself how he came to do it—but she had withdrawn it from his grasp.

What did they talk about then? About nothing at all, about the strawberries and gooseberries, and whether they would soon be ripe. They were pleased to show each other the yellow and black flies hovering with whirring wings in the air above the raspberry-canecanecanes. Hetty told him that away here in the summer there would bloom hollyhocks, prince's feathers, dahlias, jalap and lobelias—she had made inquiries—and that this delicate white cloud floating through the air so quietly and so happily was from the big poplar standing over there with one branch struck by lightning ; and that in the evening there were so many different

perfumes and colours that it was quite uncanny—she really could not put it into words.

Then Kossling began to speak, in an eager, unbroken flow of words, and by degrees Hetty grew more and more silent.

At first he talked about his journey and of the great changes he had found at home. His sisters had grown up and were at work or married. His brothers were at trades and had looked askance at him because he was not earning so much as they were, especially one who was getting on exceedingly well. The town was beautiful with an old-world air even in everyday life, a real poet's corner as he felt now. Everything was so quiet and lived only in memories of the past. But he could not live there yet ; he would like to go to Paris now—he needed active movement, he needed many men, many minds, growth, intercourse.

He would go there sometime, if he could only live on his interest ; to-day he had to encroach on capital. He would come to utter poverty at home ; of course he was not speaking of money, but sometime he must go out into the strain and stress of life. He should like to know first what he had to do here—for, to be quite honest, he couldn't quite make out.

Perhaps it was always like that here, and perhaps no one really knew what part he was to play in this carnival.

Often he thought that he was in the world to look about a little, to write a few verses and to tell a few tales. But then again, this all seemed so worthless and he felt as if his life belonged to humanity as a whole. Then again he thought that that was all tilting against windmills and that he was called to serve Beauty and to recognise her, wherever he might meet her.

He was so lonely now, so terribly lonely—day after day, all by himself. He believed he always talked aloud to himself and felt it relieved him. All day long he imagined stories of every possible kind, and perhaps he would soon write them ; some were very beautiful and some very horrible—fitting products of loneliness



in a silent room. They almost reminded one of Hoffmann. There was one tale of a man who comes home, strikes a light because he has an uncanny feeling, and as he goes up to his bed it looks to him as though he was already in it. And as he throws a light on it, there is his head lying on the pillow, but all by itself, without the body ; only his head and his own eyes look at him and blink so queerly at the unshaded candlelight. And he is filled with a terrible fear lest the tale should get about that he had cut off his head, so he picks up his own head by the hair and carries it to a corner of his cupboard. And the next morning . . . “ But I will tell you another tale that I am going to write—something wonderfully beautiful ; a love story that takes place in a great garden—about two people who dream away a whole summer and never notice that they are growing old and that this summer is their whole life. The whole story is filled with the sweet scent of the limes and of song, like the rustling of the trees here. It is an old garden with stone figures in niches in the box-trees and a like cottage with a golden arched roof, almost hidden by the trees that surround it like watchful sentinels. And the tulips bloom there the whole year through.

“ Then I mean to write a novel—a great novel ; the scene is to be laid in Borsig, among the workers of an iron foundry, and the whole book is to resound to the heavy thud of the hammers on the enormous milled sheets.

“ Those are just plans, Fräulein Hetty. Of what value are they ? Perhaps only folly and life is meant for something else. But I don't know how to set about it. You see, I have been a teacher and even coached young gentlemen for their doctor's examination, but it is no pleasure to me now—I thoroughly dislike doing it. I could, of course, teach at home ; in fact, they have asked me twice already—again just now. They do not wish to lose my ability, they write—hold out prospects for the future, are anxious to tie me down. But I shouldn't know what to say to the

boys, it all seems so self-evident to me and so little worth learning. They may be right at home in saying I am torn up by the roots, for their only standard is worldly success, and men are so made that they feel offended if we do not fulfil their expectations, just in the same way as they think that every success we have is their work. I should long since have yielded and crept under the yoke if my demands had not been so few that somehow or other I have managed to scrape together enough to satisfy them. But a man who in his youth—all his youth—has, in this place, that and the other, eaten the scanty bread of charity three or four times a week or else had no dinner, is not likely to be tempted by the prospect of a daily cut from the joint.

“If I came from a rich home, of course I couldn’t bear permanently such a life as I have led and, even as it is, the thought is sometimes forced upon me that youth does not last for ever, and that we all want a warm room as we grow old.

“The world is still full of beauty though, and not a morning but brings it to me in some fresh form, offers it to me without money and without price. But when, like Lessing, we want to have the trees red in spring because green gets monotonous after we have seen it for dozens of years . . . and then when we run about outside like a lost dog, not knowing where or to whom we belong . . .”

All this Kossling said, speaking with a flushed face, hurriedly indeed, but at great length and dwelling on every point.

They had stopped, facing one another, somewhere by the fence at the end of the garden. Hetty was still carrying her hat by its strings over her arm like a basket, and they both looked somewhat sadly over the meadows, now yellow and red with kingcups and sorrel. The field path in front of them, with its twisted, scorched tree-trunks, had a somewhat neglected, sordid look about it, but farther on a shady avenue of trees rose in lofty dignity ; not a soul was to be seen



under the wide expanse of blue sky, with its white layers of cloud one above the other, only, far away, a cart rattled in a cloud of red dust along the country road, and in the direction where the Spree might lie, one caught a glimpse of a few straight, pointed masts. All else was silent and solitary. . . .

So they stood at the fence, side by side, in a long silence, both lost in their own thoughts.

"I cannot think how I came to tell you all that. I am almost afraid I have wearied you, Hetty."

"No, Doctor, anything but that! But"—Hetty's lips quivered—"you make me sad, for I should so like you to be happy—indeed, that is my one wish for you."

"Why? I am not unhappy so long as the world can offer such union of beauty and grace. But I think one must be stupid—I mean not a thinker—to be really happy. We must face the fact that the life of everyone who will not fall in with general ideas and views is a tragedy. Art is, I think, a crown of thorns intertwined with flowers, drops of blood run into our eyes whilst every passing breeze brings us a wave of sweet perfume. . . . But let us talk of other things—all this is such folly, such self-torture. Fräulein Hetty, now you must tell me something of yourself;" and he took her hand in his. "Forgive me all this; I feel like the cuckoo who does nothing but proclaim his own name. Listen, there he cries! Talk about yourself. Anything. What are you reading? Are you doing any sewing? Tell me about your uncle. When do you go to bed here? Do you go out with your aunt? Do you walk in the garden in the evening? I picture you coming along some dark path, your tall, bright form slowly growing more and more distinct."

Hetty looked at him with astonishment in her eyes and something like gratitude in her smile, but still continued the same train of thought.

"No, I think we can be happy as soon as we stop tormenting ourselves. Happiness seems to me like a little unnoticed weed such as chickweed, growing on

every side for anyone who cares enough to stoop and gather it. Happiness and unhappiness are, I think, Doctor, not so much the result of our lot in life as of our temperament."

Kossling felt nearer to tears than laughter now—why, he did not know.

"I am only speaking for myself. There are, it is true, days when I am sad and evenings when I sit and cry, when I feel almost overwhelmed and quite as old as Uncle and Aunt. But then again, I have days and weeks when I am calm and happy with no unsatisfied desires. How beautiful the last few weeks have been in this garden, lonely as it is, small and circumscribed. Yet I never remember such feelings before. Often, in the quiet of the morning, I could fancy all the outside world had passed away, and only this house and garden remained with the fields at the back and the road overshadowed by lime-trees in the front; of that I am often firmly persuaded. If you lived out here in the country for a time, you too would think differently, and all that now seems of such importance to you would shrivel into nothing and slip away. I have really felt the want of only one thing—it is not nice to have to keep all my thoughts to myself . . . sometimes I would have liked someone else. . . . Do you laugh? Of course, what can I say to you, then? What do I know of life? Although indeed I realised its serious side sooner than most—but I understand you only too well, almost, for although I have never had the experience in my own life of real anxiety, of not knowing in the morning if there will be anything left to eat, of having to ask with every thaler: 'How long will it last?'—and that has really often made me ungrateful here, because I have never had it brought home to me that I have nothing of my own—yet I always have an inner feeling that I do not belong here—sometimes I could put my hand into the beggar's and go right away with him."

Hetty said all this in her gentle, unaffected way, more as if speaking to herself than to Kossling.



Kossling was busy tearing to pieces a couple of leaves that he had plucked from a privet-bush.

"Why do you tell me this?" he asked, and Hetty could tell from his tone that it pained him.

"I tell you, Fräulein Hetty, anxieties, unhappiness, passion—what have these to do with you? They must not touch you—do you understand?—they must not! Wherever you tread, flowers must spring under your feet as they do here. And the grass must lift its every blade again after your passing. That is how your life must be. How dare you compare it with mine? I tell you, I have been thinking the whole time of you, of nothing but you."

A hot, embarrassed flush rose to Hetty's cheeks.

"Yes, I have. Not for an hour, day or night have I thought of anything else—I have thought of you as we think of summer in the dark days of winter, for then it seems but one long, blue day, free from darkness, rain or wind. And I would fain keep such cheerful thoughts of you as of something so full of joy, so free from unfulfilled desire—it simply must not be that this point of light should become overclouded, partly for my sake and a hundredfold more for yours."

Kossling spoke with a half-laugh, yet with a suppressed note of despair in his words that almost brought tears to Hetty's voice. Yet she had to laugh—not in mockery but from joy—and this laugh gave her back all her self-possession once again.

"This surely does not lie quite within our own power, Doctor"—she listened to her own words as she spoke. "But I will promise you to do my best to cause you no anxiety, although our life would lack something if its path was only strewn with flowers. Would you like to have no salt in your food? Not a pinch shall come on to our table this evening, and I shall see if you do not ask for it."

Kossling nodded very thoughtfully with his eyes fixed straight in front of him. Then he smiled, for this comparison appealed to the writer in him. He

was ashamed now of his last words and the melancholy they expressed. And—whether it was the cool quiet of the green around, or the presence of his beautiful companion—in a moment all the clouds on his overcast sky were dispersed by a life-giving breeze, and the hopeful joyous blue of youth and health—for he had an iron constitution—beckoned to him in all directions from the fleeting shadows.

He took Hetty's hand. "You must forgive me"—and his voice was frank and gay—"but a full cup is easily spilt."

"Oh," Hetty answered, with a laugh as clear as a bell, "what is there to forgive indeed? You said nothing that could hurt me."

Kossling had a sudden feeling as though the fence against which he was leaning tipped forward slowly, very slowly, whilst the path in front ended abruptly in an abyss. That, however, passed in a moment, and he felt once more a freedom and lightness of spirit such as he could never remember before. For he, too, had passed all his life hitherto under the pressure of an ever-present burden that might indeed now and again be lifted a little from his shoulders, but only the next moment to fall back again heavier than before.

"Shall we go and see if we can get our little house, perhaps it is to let this year?" laughed Kossling. He was not talking any more now either, only laughing—laughing away most of his former words. For, in spite of his thirty years, there was a splendid air of youth about him, with his slender figure and his happy, healthy face.

Hetty did not say "No." She thought she had done her duty now that she had shown him the garden, he had seen for himself the prospects of a good strawberry crop, so that there was nothing to hinder longer excursions. She was booted and spurred too, so that she would not need to go up into the house again—or only for a minute to speak to the maid and give necessary orders about the evening meal. It was quite possible,



of course, that her aunt would not be back but, in any case, there must be something prepared for her supper.

They turned their backs on to the bright expanse of sky, went a few steps in single file on the narrow paths of the orchard, together passed quickly through the shade under the elm- and ash-trees, past the summer-houses, without uttering a syllable, and if their hands inadvertently—Chance indeed has her eyes bandaged but she peeps a little—inadvertently met, they laughed and though they both thought it very foolish, yet they could not help doing it.

In the courtyard under the chestnut-trees they came across the worthy Frau Konnecke using her hands very energetically to impress upon one of her children, a boy of eleven with a head as round as an apple and a face like half a well-baked potato, maxims for his future in easily grasped language of blows.

Frau Konnecke paused in her gymnastic exercises to greet the two with marked friendliness and to ask if Kossling happened to be Fräulein Hetty's sweetheart. She had long since silently assumed his existence, since, in her rank of life, she had never yet met with a girl of Hetty's age without a lover of some sort.

Kossling undertook the responsibility of answering, and said that neither of them knew anything of that matter so far, but that he felt greatly flattered and would be rejoiced to play the part assigned to him by Frau Konnecke. In return, however, he hoped Frau Konnecke would have a good crop of currants, as the fruit had set so well.

But Frau Konnecke did not agree with him, and gave a short discourse on the prospects and profits of small fruits.

"Yes, yes," she said, "this is how it is with the rubbishing things; when you could use them, there are none and when they do come again, there are such masses as though they had been pitched on to the trees in bushelfuls. It's always the same with the wretched things." Frau Konnecke spoke very slowly,

with great dignity and, as she thought, with a beautiful cultured choice of language—because Fräulein Hetty was there.

But when Hetty had gone into the house to give her orders and to fetch something, Frau Konnecke let herself go a little more, so that Kossling, on Hetty's return, had been carefully informed that Frau Konnecke with Karl had had to have a doctor—which she never did as a rule, not even a midwife—and that she said every day to her daughter Emily, who was now seventeen years old: "Emily, one bit of advice I'd like to give you, don't have ought to do with men. They scarcely need to look at you and you've got a child!" Wasn't she right there, too? You couldn't keep too sharp an eye on girls.

Kossling, however, had no more time left to agree with Frau Konnecke or to expound his views on this knotty question, as Hetty returned at that moment. And as they wished to go to the Castle Park they had with heavy hearts to bid farewell to Frau Konnecke who had not, meantime, forgotten her mission, for the two were barely in the hall before she had begun her heavy hand movements again on the little round-head, who had not even made use of his chance to put a little more space between himself and his kind instructress—an omission that seemed to point to very poorly developed brain-power in Konnecke junior.

Even in the front garden they could still hear the resounding expression of the worthy woman's disapproval.

As the little wooden gate closed behind them, they both stood somewhat at a loss what next to do. Kossling did not know whether he might now venture to offer his arm to Hetty. He hesitated, for they might meet someone, but he resolved to do so afterwards. He still felt as if under a spell, and the whole way down the long straight road he repeated to himself something which he imagined had been one of Hetty's answers just before.

They were walking in the shade themselves, but



the sun was shining brightly over their heads on the green foliage of the limes on their left, and down the broad path, lying like a narrowing band of gold before them, not a creature was to be seen in the quiet of this spring afternoon.

Suddenly Hetty began to sing something, or rather to warble half under her breath little simple songs that every child knows. And Kossling joined in with the seconds, and before they knew where they were they had taken hands like two children and were walking along, tall and straight in simple happiness to the rhythm of their song, beating time with their hands.

It was impossible to say who had begun ; they each thought it was the other, but also thought that perhaps it was not so either.

And when Hetty left off, their hands did not part, but they still went on in step and time, almost feeling as though their hands had grown together and that it would cause them pain to separate. All this time Kossling had not once looked at Hetty, nor Hetty at him, but both gazed down the long straight road as if happiness must come to them from that direction.

Now and again Kossling spoke of things he had seen or that had happened, for Hetty said she had no idea how the world was going. He spoke of the plaster cast of the Amazons that he had seen in the work-rooms at Kiss, and of his amazement to see how full of life it was. But the King had said he would like to see the fool who would find the money to have it done in bronze. And in all he said Kossling had but the one feeling of immeasurable tenderness for Hetty, so sweet as almost to bring tears to his eyes. He felt as if he were stroking everything about her with fingers too light to be perceived, felt such boundless reverence that his own personality faded away in it as mist before the sun, felt that he was but there to admire this beauteous creature, straight in body and mind alike, and his admiration was entirely free from any thought of ever having any possible right to a share in this beauty.

The long path before them grew gradually less, and now it was in full sunshine beyond the last two trees. They kept so well in step that the ground literally resounded to their tread, growing ever quicker and gayer as they talked—with hands always firmly clasped.

Hetty spoke of Jason, whom she had not seen for so long, and Kossling said he was almost a stranger to him too, now ; not that his feeling with regard to Jason had changed, but he had scarcely seen him once lately.

What was his feeling, then, with regard to him, his candid and honest opinion without considering that Hetty was his niece?

“ Well then, I think Jason Geybert belongs to those people who always disappoint ; from whom we expect, expect, expect all our lives—and, all at once, the time has gone and nothing has happened. But I value his friendship for he is a connoisseur in everything, not only in reading but in whatever appeals to his sense of beauty, and this, too, certainly needs something of an artist.”

Hetty nodded.

“ But what does it matter, Fräulein Hetty? What does it matter. Who is not disappointing? Have I not, up till now, disappointed all who have pinned their faith on me? The more people we meet in this life, the more often we are disappointed. I have known young students whose names, I was convinced, would throw Hegel's and Fichte's into the shade, young poets who I believed would, one day, be classed with the greatest, and their notes have died down, blown away by the wind, swept into some quiet corner. And just those of whom we never expected it, who have never particularly struck us, are those whom we read, and of whom we hear until we too listen and say : ‘ Ah, there speaks genius ; I never expected it from him.’ ”

“ But your uncle will certainly be one of the guests when I summon my round table.”

Hetty looked at him incredulously. “ Did I never



tell you," Kossling laughed, "that I am going to rent the castle here and live in it with a company of young people—somewhat differently from my noble predecessors here—with classical studies, but also a wrestling-hall and school of oratory? we shall, like Byron, read all the novels in the world, keep a tame bear and shoot with bows and arrows—and first on my list stands Jason Geybert."

"And where do I come in?" pouted Hetty.

"Well, I don't think that would suit you at all," Kossling answered seriously. "There are really only to be men by themselves to sharpen one another's wits till sparks fly as from flint and steel. Are you angry with me? Well then, be my lady of the house, sit at the head of the table and keep the threads of conversation in your own hand. When the meal is over, I will offer you my arm and lead you to the door. With calm dignity you permit me to kiss your hand, and go to your apartments whilst I return to my friends, the serving-men hand round long pipes, replace the wine on the table and rockets are fired off of intellect and wit, of sentimentality and cynicism. And I shall nominate Jason Geybert as Marshal of the Round Table; that I have decided."

"What nonsense you talk! But I understand. There seems to me something very pleasant about men's friendship because it is so free from pettiness or envy."

Then the path came to an end in the open park and they both walked silently for a little under silver planes with their smooth, dappled trunks. And soon, over the trees to the left, their goal appeared, the golden figure, poised in mid-air, in its gay dance on the openwork top of the cupola, that flashed out suddenly like some vision, with a strange glittering aureole from the rays of the late afternoon sun; a few more steps and the castle lay before them, in its full extent, with long low wings and high central cupola. Below, its high white windows looked out of the golden-yellow walls through the dark tree-trunks, and up above

it hid its heavy roof in the foliage—still fresh with the first shades of spring—of the same trees whose topmost boughs shone red in the afternoon sunshine.

Soldiers were drilling in the distance, raising clouds of dust and casting long, grotesque shadows across the sand. Except for a white-haired castle attendant, languidly crossing the empty court, everything lay quiet and peaceful under the slanting rays of the late sunshine.

The two stood in some hesitation before the gate, whilst the two stone warriors with drawn swords above their heads maintained their fixed attitude of mutual attack.

“It is strange,” Kossling remarked, “how in these old pleasure castles I never think of rulers and states or of wars and generals, but, in these long corridors and suites of rooms, I can only think how many secret meetings there must have been between court ladies and devoted pages, and notes pushed into chimney corners and little Cupids waiting on the window brackets. Everywhere one catches something like the aroma of love stories all past and gone—perhaps it is but the effect of the loneliness and beauty of the forsaken rooms; I always feel that true love must search out such corners where there is none to disturb, where everything is but a mirror and echo of love, where every prospect, every shadow under the trees before the windows, the broad avenue between the limes and the hidden paths through the bushes, seem made for love and love alone.

Hetty looked at him with something like a laugh, a roguish laugh in the depths of those eyes of hers so like the velvet blossoms of some dark pansy.

“We will go rather into the park, Doctor,” she said with secret amusement as she suddenly took Kossling’s arm: “Besides, you said that you didn’t want me in the castle, that you would escort me to my apartments and drink with your friends—so let us go into the park.”

“No,” Kossling answered; “that was not what I



meant. Do you want to share the castle with me only. I wonder what we two could do with a castle—with a whole castle just for us two, where everything is ours. I fancy we should flutter about in it like two lost birds."

And, saying this, Kossling drew Hetty's arm, which lay so soft and cool on his coat-sleeve, close to his side and for the first time their eyes met. And this meeting gave them such pleasure that they often renewed it, at shorter and shorter intervals for a longer and longer time, at appropriate and inappropriate moments and with significant or unimportant words.

"Then let us go into the park," Hetty said, hanging firmly—like a naughty child—on to Kossling's arm as they passed through the black, trellised gate with its golden stars.

"Down here?" Kossling asked, pointing to the long lime-walk now so flooded with the sun's red beams that every gnat and buzzing cockchafer shone and glittered like a drop of gold—"down here?" pointing to the limes where they could hear from time to time the shrill notes of thrushes on the wing.

"No," said Hetty, "that is not a favourite walk of mine. Come, I will show you this way;" and keeping close to the castle, they passed the beds of pansies, growing in bright patches between great green beech stems, for all the world like huge green stones, every bed outlined with mathematical precision by little shrubs trimmed with minutest care, until, by way of the orangery, they came into the open and the whole park, with its long straight lime-walks, its stretches of meadowland, its lilac copses, and groups of tall trees round the turf, lay before them like an open book whose pages they could turn at will. Here the short, thick-stemmed orange-trees were growing in wooden tubs beside the low stone seats and the busts of the Roman emperors, with their heavy selfish faces. In front of the castle itself there was an enormous set bed planted with nothing but great bright tulips of different colours.

"Do you know this?" Hetty asked:

"Long the walks which lead through tulips, fields of tulips  
shining there,  
Silently beneath the yew-trees stand the statues white  
and fair."

"No," Kossling answered, with a smile, "I don't know it."

"I found it in one of the annuals that Uncle Jason lent me."

"Don't you know how it goes on, Hetty?"

"Not exactly," Hetty answered in great confusion.

"Oh, please, please, why won't you say it?"

Hetty could not withstand this petition, and began to recite with droll merriment and in so loud a tone that a couple of old gentlemen passing by deep in conversation stopped short in amazement.

"Through the garden, Chloe wanders, beauteous Chloe with  
her knight;

Just behind them, soft creeps Eros, rising now to aim  
aright."

Both considered this a very suitable opportunity to convince themselves with conscientious certainty of their mutual presence in this beautiful spring world by means of a long, happy look into the other's eyes.

"There goes Cupid's arrow, and he has hit the mark," Kossling remarked very contentedly after a short interval.

And sure enough Hetty, like Chloe in Eichendorff's poem, as punishment for his false, deceitful ways, with the hand she had withdrawn from his arm, gave him quite a firm blow on his. Then off she ran in her light dress, tripping along very fast in her little shoes a short way in front of him down the green, leafy avenue, being firmly convinced that Kossling would not accept that without protest.

But there he stood, motionless and lost in thought, looking after her. The idea that he now had some



active share in all this living beauty suddenly overwhelmed him with happiness. Yet, in the same moment his whole fate stood before him and his eyes filled with tears.

But only for a moment ! He dashed the tears away with a quick movement of his hand and ran to catch Hetty, who was by now quite a long way ahead. And when he caught her, he stopped, quite short of breath, for she had had a really good start.

When Hetty saw that Kossling harboured no evil designs but, having accepted the blow calmly as well deserved, was only too pleased to be at her side again, she slipped her arm through his once more, and they walked together along the shores of the pond, under the overarching trees, so low-growing in places, that all that could be seen of the water was perchance some silvery eye peeping through the network of green leaves, but in others, only a few steps farther on, thin enough to allow a full view of the tall groups of trees on the opposite bank.

Again and again they caught sight of the castle, lying red and golden in the evening sunshine, crowned with its dancing, glittering figure. Whenever they looked round, there it stood—behind them, on the other side of the water, at the end of the straight paths, between the beautiful clumps of trees and beyond the little narrow pond-paths with their gentle curves and soft grass banks, here white with cow-parsley and there crimson with water-pinks ; again and again it reappeared . . . at the end of some long vista intersected and crossed by meadows, roads and watercourses, under the bridges that overarched these, and across the pond's crimsoned surface—as though multiplied a thousand times, wherever one's eye turned, there it was.

Hetty and Kossling went this way and that, arm-in-arm on the narrow paths but quite independently of each other in the broad avenues. They sat for a little on the bench by the pond and watched the swallows as they chased each other, skimming the surface of the water and flashing a silvery white as they turned in their

flight. Kossling had sunk into a dreamy mood, which took all sense of reality from everything that had ever been or happened in his life. Hetty only felt with pleasure that she was loved, honoured with a modest devotion and that she liked—well, perhaps more than liked—Kossling. But it never struck her in the least that this liking could bring anything else in its train or lay any obligation on him. She was only lighthearted and glad that they had reached such an understanding without the need of words.

Their conversation turned from one subject to another. Kossling talked again about Brunswick, with its curiously named streets, and one called Bolker Street as in Dusseldorf, talked, too, of the hardships of his proud, young days, for he had been poor, miserably poor, but proud too, because at school he always sat with his torn coat above rich folks' sons and could write their names on the blackboard when they made a noise. That, however, had been in his early school-days, later on he had found the restraint very irksome, for school had not satisfied him and nobody knows what might have happened, had he not always been able to master his tasks so easily and quickly. At first he had despised those on the lower benches, but later on he chose them for his only associates. And his happiest memories were of the friends of his later schooldays, many of whom, though misunderstood, even tormented, by the masters and persecuted by the boys, yet had an inner life of rich beauty. And from that time on, he had always been the same, never able to fit in happily anywhere and always taking the exception as the rule.

Meantime they had strayed into a part where the park ended in swampy meadows and bogs, through which the river crept lazily in wide curves, until, in the distance, it disappeared under the shade of a narrow strip of woodland, now wreathed in mist, for the evening sun stood close above it.

So they turned, went by a narrow, rippling stream, along a raised bank quite overhung with willows, and



for a little distance followed a hidden mule-track, where they had to walk in single file that seemed to give each a more acute sense of the other's presence than when they walked arm-in-arm. At last they stood by the little round building with a bodyguard of dark old yew-trees under the shelter of gigantic poplars. Up above, on shutters eternally closed, caryatides blinked sleepy eyes at the low red sun, peeping through the trees, and the stone figures of girls with baskets of fruit danced along the front of the little yellow house.

"Now we will see if anyone will let it to us," Kossling said. "For the summer or for the whole year?"

"For the whole year," Hetty replied.

But there was no one to be seen, not a soul to be found, although there was washing hanging out in a far-away corner by a shed. Only the flowers stood in little rows, close and silent, round the cottage, narcissi, pansies, lilies of the valley and gay annuals, all shining with a bright, unearthly light in the twilight, which was just casting its earliest shadows here under the trees.

"We have no luck," said Kossling seriously.

Hetty, too, had a sudden feeling of sadness as of a note rising from some muffled strings and echoing on as they came out to the broad stream of water lazily flowing onward, its calm surface but seldom ruffled by the evening breeze that gently touched the tops of the tall trees until every leaf turned its silver side to the light. Even this gentle breeze made Hetty shiver.

Kossling felt the shiver, and said, as he laid a protecting arm round Hetty's shoulder: "Sweet one, I found a poem, too, in a periodical.

"In the path of thy life like a beggar I stand,  
Yet all to no purpose, my cap in my hand;  
But when I return with fleet, fiery steed,  
To my silent white castle my dear wife I'll lead."

Hetty leant against him without a word, flushed and

trembling. Then, moved by a sudden impulse, they threw their arms round one another as though irresistibly drawn to each other, forced to a close and ardent embrace ; their lips met and parted, met again as though nothing could ever tear them asunder again. And Kossling saw a few tears rise in Hetty's dark, velvet eyes, slowly gather, overflow and trickle down her cheeks, as his lips sought her face, cheeks, eyes, forehead, even the hair on her temples, not leaving a spot untouched by kisses filled with deep and passionate emotion.

Suddenly Hetty pulled herself together and said :

"Come, my dear, good boy, now we will be reasonable ; I must go." And she leaned forward again and pressed her lips on his in such a long, long kiss that Kossling well-nigh felt dizzy with joy.

"That is the last," she said, as she turned away. They did not race each other now, but went with lagging footsteps and silent lips, side by side, along the dusky paths, over the little tracks by the pond of clear water whose depths reflected the rosy brightness of the evening sky.

When they spoke, it was of indifferent matters, quite avoiding any direct address, for they could not speak as strangers, and their lips hesitated over the more tender terms of loving intimacy.

The shadows lay heavy under the clumps of trees whose foliage was crimson in the sun's fiery rays. The thrushes had found lofty perches and were pouring out raptures of song into the evening air, but all else was mute, save that, in the far distance down by the water, a nightingale was timidly essaying her first stumbling trills and gurgles.

Kossling's mind was swept by emotions that came and went like sunshine and rain, hail and snow, on some April day, dripping with rain and white with snow one moment, glistening with golden glory in every nook and cranny the very next.

He felt as though he had now won something that would arm him against all else, so that, come what



might, he could never sink back again into the old misery. Everything that had occupied and filled his mind before now seemed so worthless and insignificant in comparison with this unmerited happiness that had come into his life.

We are all busy with politics and things in general, poetry and life-work, the meaning of things and food, struggles, anxieties, lonely torture, and suddenly a whirlwind falls upon us and all is blown away as though these other things had never been there to fill our souls with sadness.

Hetty walked by his side with firm steps and head erect, striving to fight down all anxiety and misgiving as to her future—for she felt now that the future of both was inextricably interwoven. No, she was determined that she would not allow any of this to overshadow one second of the rare and beautiful present, where everything had its message for her, and the scent of the leaves, still damp from the rain, the presence of the man she loved, the bright evening light, everything around, even to the silent statues amongst the trees, lulled her to rest with flattering tongues.

When they had again come to the gate, with its golden stars and points, they stopped to look back on the dusky lime avenue and the groups of trees in the park, ranged like a dark wall behind the low orangery. But the sentinel, with his gun in his arm, marching up and down with heavy, clattering steps—a coarse, heavily-built fellow—told them they must leave the park, for they were the last and the gate had to be shut.

Kossling was annoyed at this and inclined to give a sharp answer, but Hetty pulled his arm nervously and, clinging to him, whispered an urgent petition that he would not say a word.

Then once more they caught sight of the golden figure, now standing out like a dark silhouette against the fiery glow of the clear evening sky. They passed beyond her sight until the twilight of the long road enwrapped them both with close and tender embrace

as the quiet secrecy of our own room surrounds us after some beautiful day of vivid, varying experiences.

The nearer they came to Frau Konnecke's house, the slower and more hesitating their steps—they stopped sometimes for several minutes, either talking or in silence, close to the trees, keeping away from the little circles of yellow light just as Hetty had noticed others do every Sunday evening.

Neither of them said a word of how things were to be between them, of plans, hopes, prospects, of hindrances or difficulties ; just as though they had agreed not to speak of these and to let nothing come between them that might embitter the happiness and quiet joy of the present. For Hetty, beautiful, proud Hetty Geybert, had long since regretted her late resolve that that should be the last, and their lips found meeting ever easier and parting more difficult, just as the waves of a river pouring into the sea and the billows of the incoming tide rush to meet and mingle in one long embrace.

And they walked along slowly—so slowly—went for a few short steps into the almost total darkness of a side street of low, small houses, only to turn back again into the more important thoroughfare. Twilight gradually faded into half-darkness, and darkness deepened into warm night, when earth sent up her mists and vapours and the sky came closer with a few stars peeping out, like eyes red with weeping.

Over and over again the two resolved with solemn promises to be sensible now and mindful of their dignity, and, over and over again, they laughed and forgot their vows. Short spells of gaiety and child-like laughter were followed by periods of earnest thought, jokes and trifling talk—for, all at once, they had so very much to tell each other of bygone times, of little peculiarities, incidents of childhood and school-days—all this, which was only of any importance for them alone, was followed by earnest, thoughtful words.

“Do you know, my darling,” Kossling said, “that for weeks now—for you must not think this is the first



day I have had your companionship, for weeks you have not left my side—and all this time I have been filled with wonder that I have met you. For I believe that in the whole world there is but one other destined for every human being and both are sent to wander without ceasing over the earth until they meet. I have been born here ten, thirty times and gone back again, only to return once more to look for you. Do you remember how I said to you that I hoped it would not be another five hundred years before I met you again? ”

And Hetty did remember.

Kossling went on to say how strange it all was, and how he now saw everything in a different light. He was always trying to persuade himself that his place was in the hurly-burly, on the outposts with others where the fight was the fiercest, where there was movement and growth, but again and again he asked himself in surprise how all this concerned him, what he had to do with it, whether they were *his* rich and poor, his kings and constitution, his fancies and books. He felt now that this was none of his business, that he had no idea how to tackle it, felt that all he wanted was rest to become himself, and that all he must have for his own was some little corner where he could be happier than in any spacious palace. He asked nothing, nothing at all from life but the gift of happiness which had now fallen into his arms. And if in return he should have all his life through to cart stones with all the others, he would not hesitate for a moment, nor have one moment's regret.

But Hetty was of the opinion that this was only idle talk.

Now, at last, they had almost reached Frau Konnecke's house and the scent of the lilacs and laburnums leaning in dim, indistinct masses against the fence, came to meet them, intermingled and overpowered by the orange scent of the white acacias that from the back garden were breathing out their fragrance into the night mists. The two hearts beat hard

and fast now that the moment to part had really come. As they still stood so quietly under the lime-tree, a light shone in the aunt's room and a broad, illuminating ray poured on to the bushes and flowers, showing every lilac-leaf distinctly—poured out and gradually faded in the velvet darkness of the spring night, never even reaching the lime-tree where the two had sought refuge.

Then Aunt Rika herself stepped up to the window and looked out, but as she stood in the light herself, everything outside was doubly dark for her, and she never dreamt that a few steps off Kossling and her niece Hetty were standing under the tree, holding their breath. After Aunt Rika had let down the blinds, Hetty and Kossling once more threw themselves into each other's arms and Hetty, proud Hetty Geybert, shook with her sobs whilst Kossling stroked her hair, temples and cheeks, encouraged her with gentle caresses and kissed her with whispered endearments as if he were soothing a tired, unhappy child.

Then, at last, they bade each other farewell with a silent, firm hand-clasp, followed by a kiss, then another hand-clasp and more kisses, until, with painful reluctance, they tore themselves apart. Long after Hetty had lost sight of Kossling she still thought she could see him in the darkness and hear his footsteps. At last she crept in very softly, so that the gate should not creak, up the little steps, brushing past the cool leaves of the rustling privet, in fear lest the door should be locked; but Frau Konnecke had left it open and put the key inside for Hetty to turn after her.

Frau Konnecke herself never lit a candle all the summer through and went to bed with the chickens or at most but an hour or two later.

At Hetty's gentle knock something stirred in Aunt Rika's room, but her aunt did not come; only after a little time the maid came pattering down the passage with bare feet, for she, too, was ready for bed. She said she had supper ready, and would Fräulein Hetty like to have it in her bedroom? But Hetty said "No,"



went straight to her room, threw the window wide open, looked out into the evening mist and up to the sky, hanging like a curtain of light above the tree-tops, as she wondered where Kossling might be now ; whether he had got as far as the little toll-house, if it might not have been safer for him to drive, and whether he would by any chance be wise enough to take one of the cabs at the castle gate. Then she began very quietly to undress, for no one could look from outside into her dark room. She had determined to lose herself in sound, sweet sleep, but her blood boiled, and as she pulled the blanket over her head and shut her eyes, she seemed to see a dark red cloud encircling her, and as she tried to fix her mind on something that concerned them both, it disappeared, like leaves and blossoms driven into the brook by the wind—there they go, and where are they now? Hetty had a sudden feeling as though she was surrounded by life—or was it only the night breeze coming in from the trees? Still she felt as if every whisper once uttered within these walls, the love that had rested in these pillows reawakened to life once more and benumbed her in its tender depths. For a long time she lay there, hot, trembling, troubled, not daring to move a limb, but longing to scream aloud as she felt again the kisses that had been showered down on to hair, mouth and cheeks.

Hetty could endure this state of defenceless weakness no longer and she got up as quietly as she had lain down, put on a few of the garments, shining white and distinct on the chair in the darkness, found in the corner a shawl to throw round her shoulders, slipped her bare feet into light slippers and, scarcely daring to breathe, crept out as nervously as a thief, listening after every step lest anything should stir, and, starting with every footfall at the creaking of the boards or of some piece of furniture, she took her timid way out of her bedroom along the passage and down the few little steps.

Nor did she breathe freely until she stopped for a moment under the leafy branches of the chestnut-trees,

where the air was warm and moist as in a greenhouse. But when a dog over in the next courtyard began to bark and howl as he pushed his great head against the fence, Hetty moved on quickly along the familiar paths into the depths of the dark garden.

It was cooler there than under the chestnuts, and the fresh night air blew cold enough through her light clothing to make her shiver and draw the shawl close round her shoulders.

Then Hetty went with restless feet through the orchard, filled with the scent of the acacias, where stars peeped down now and again through the leafy branches, and on without a stop through the fruit-plot, along the narrow paths between the dewy raspberry-canecanes where the wide sky above her looked like a dark, star-spangled bell. Her thoughts went back to Kossling's words when he spoke of her coming in her light garments out of the darkness of the path, and her mind dwelt again and again on him and on the happiness she felt, although it was mingled with despair.

And once more she heard every word of the afternoon, felt every kiss of the evening just gone. . . . The garden was so silent that she heard the church clocks striking in the distance, she scarcely knew how, but there they were, quite distinct, every quarter, half and at longer intervals every hour ; not that she had any idea how late it was, because, although she heard the strokes, she never counted them. But it was almost light already, or at any rate seemed so to her, when, at last, she went back to her room so weary, so utterly weary.

Once back in her room, Hetty could scarcely close the window before she fell on her bed as unconsciously and heavily as a stone and slept a sound, dreamless sleep, until the sun was high over the land once more.

\* \* \* \* \*

Hetty did not wake before late next morning and then did not know where she was, until, by slow degrees, all the memory of the last evening and night came back to her.



But she had scarcely rubbed the sleep out of her eyes and recalled to mind each little detail when everything, so to speak, was nothing—all past and gone—and things once more ran in their old, accustomed groove.

Aunt Rika came back again in pouring rain from Berlin, for towards morning clouds had crept up from Spandau, a slight shower had begun soon after, and now it really looked as if the water pouring down from the sloping roof in wide, splashing streams would never cease, but go on with its present performance till crack of doom. And the aunt had got wet, although the leather flap had been let down in the cab and, quite contrary to her usual habit, she was very depressed and silent. As a rule, she let off all her news as readily as any repeater watch, but to-day she never opened her lips, that is, of course, she was not quite silent, for even though Aunt Rika might say little, she still rivalled any Mennonite preacher in eloquence; still, it was evident that she did not speak, as usual, because she enjoyed it, but rather to divert attention from her silence, and not a syllable did she utter about last evening.

Hetty sat opposite to her in the bare dining-room at the back, feeling as never before the oppressive atmosphere of its green darkness and, whilst she questioned and answered with all the ease at her command, she felt that in the interval some misfortune or other had happened for her; something irremediable, something that would entirely and for ever destroy the even tenor of her life. All afternoon Aunt Rika was writing a long letter to Solomon in Leipzig, whilst Hetty sat by her, sewing in silence, and afterwards, when Hetty wanted to put a note in as well, her aunt said unfortunately there was no room for it and that the letter must go quickly. Moreover, she went herself—in spite of the rain—and posted it at the nearest post-box.

How gladly Hetty would have told her what had happened—she longed, indeed, to have someone to whom she could pour out all her heart—but as they sat opposite one another like that she could not find courage to

begin. More than once the first word was on her lips, but there it stayed, paralysed and frozen, for when she looked at her aunt's face, so utterly comic in its earnest anxiety and its little black-currant eyes, she realised sadly that she must not speak now, but had better wait until her uncle came and confess everything to him. He, Hetty knew, would stand up for them both. . . .

For worthy Frau Konnecke had yesterday—as was only to be expected—welcomed Aunt Rika back by immediately telling her that Fräulein Hetty had gone out with a gentleman and would, in her opinion, not be back very soon. She would have thought she might be home for supper, but it did not look very like it.

Frau Konnecke added, however, that she was almost always at home but had never seen the gentleman, a pleasant fair man—for she had had a talk with him—out there before. But whether Fräulein Hetty had in the morning—as she always went to the park—arranged a meeting-place with him there, of course she did not know.

To have to hear such things said about Hetty by strangers almost reduced her aunt to tears. Half the night she could not sleep, whilst fully a hundred times she wished Solomon could be there to give Hetty a good talking-to. For it really would not do to go wandering about with strange men . . . whatever could Hetty be thinking about ! It could never come to anything ; of course it was utterly out of the question. At break of day Aunt Rika was out of her bed and had driven straightaway—without any breakfast, for she might, of course, just as well get her morning coffee at Bolzani's—to see Jason at the office. Since he had brought the man to their house, it was surely his business to see them rid of him again.

But Aunt Rika's patience was sorely tried, for Herr Jason, as the porter said, was never accustomed to come to the office before half-past ten, and in the interval of waiting much of her pent-up wrath against Jason and her indignation with Kossling and Hetty had evaporated



and the subsequent conversation was much more moderate in expression and gentler in tone than might at first have been expected.

For when Jason came at last—a quarter of an hour later than usual, very spick and span, and whistling gaily—Aunt Rika, by now too impatient to sit still any longer and running like quicksilver up and down her husband's private office, had quite reached the limits of her strength and was somewhat more kindly disposed.

“Good morning, Rika ; what brings you here then ? ” inquired Jason in mingled surprise and anxiety.

But Aunt Rika gave Jason no time to recover from his surprise. “Jason,” she began, gasping for breath. “Jason, just think, the man you brought with you that evening to our house was out yesterday at Charlottenburg.”

“Well,” replied Jason—and now he, too, began to walk up and down. “Well,” he said, between two trills out of the overture to *Zampa*. “I didn't know that the Geyberts had rented all Charlottenburg. According to Prussian land-laws no one can be forbidden to go there, not even if I did bring the man to your house.”

“Well,” answered Aunt Rika in slow, sad tones, “as far as I'm concerned he can come to Charlottenburg as much as he likes, but the man was out walking with Hetty all afternoon till late at night. I never even heard Hetty come in.”

Aunt Rika thought she really had a right to this little fib to give more weight to her words.

Jason stood still with a very thoughtful look on his face, whilst the air he had only been humming with his lips before now came with a low shrill whistle through his teeth.

“Was he ? ” he said. “Was he ! Is this, then, the first time that Dr. Kossling has been out to see you ? ”

“That's what I don't know.”

“Well, but what did Hetty say to you about it ? ”

"Why, Jason, of course I shall not speak to Hetty about it! And do you think she will tell me? She is not so stupid as that."

"I see," Jason answered, biting his thin, upper lip. Then, dear sister-in-law, then first have a talk with Hetty about it—what do you expect me to do in the matter?"

"But think, if Solomon should come now—you know yourself how attached he is to Hetty—what am I to say then?" Rika asked in great distress and looking as though she expected to be a great-aunt the very next day. . . . This quite upset Jason's composure.

"But do you really think that—I mean that—do you understand—there is any cause for anxiety? Why, I know Hetty and I know Dr. Kossling, and it seems to me exceedingly doubtful. It is, of course, possible, Rika, that they find pleasure in one another's company—but more than that I think . . ."

"'Possible!' 'Possible,' he says," Aunt Rika replied in a tone implying that she had a lunatic to deal with. "Perhaps you think, Jason, that I have no eyes in my head. Perhaps you think I haven't long since seen this coming."

"But it is also possible that you may be mistaken, dear sister-in-law!"

It was now Aunt Rika's turn to jump up. "Me mistaken? Was I ever mistaken in such matters? I have no idea, Jason, how you come to say such a thing about me."

This speech was enough to restore his native sense of humour to Jason—who was beginning to find the situation painful, for he felt that he had got himself into a pretty kettle of fish—and with it he recovered his old habit of managing things from above instead of letting them come close enough to press him on all sides.

"You know, O spouse of my brother Solomon Geybert," he began, as he merrily stationed himself, feet wide apart and both hands in his pockets, in front of little, snorting Aunt Rika, "you know I have



always honoured your womanly intuition which, in such delicate affairs as have occupied your attention, has shown a wonderful gift of divination, by seeing not what actually existed but what yet might happen. And now, dear friend, what do you think ought to be done, so that on this occasion your prophecies may fail of fulfilment? "

"He always talks about prophecies! I look upon the matter as deadly serious and he acts as if it was a mere nothing! First, he brings the man to my house and afterwards, when misfortune has happened, he can only stand with his hands in his trousers' pockets! "

When Aunt Rika was excited, she broke forth in those accents of her birthplace which she managed so well, as a rule, to suppress.

Jason laughed, for the little, fat aunt, in the despair that so ill accorded with her round pancake face, really looked very comical.

"Well, and what do you think I can do in the matter, beauteous lady? "

"Fancy asking that? You must go to the man and tell him he is not to come any more. That, Jason, is your solemn duty now; you owe it to us! "

"Oh, do I, and if you now——? "

"Very well, dear Jason, if you won't go, then I shall," Aunt Rika broke in as decidedly as if she undertook such errands every day and had long known where to find the culprit in Berlin's network of streets.

"Let me tell you, Rika, that I believe Dr. Kossling, as far as I know him, is not in the habit of receiving ladies' visits of a compromising character . . . but just let me speak——"

"No, please, let me speak."

"Listen, dear Rika, if you will not submit to the speaker's ruling I shall close the debate and proceed to the orders of the day."

But Aunt Rika was too excited to pay heed to parliamentary procedure, to grammar, Queen's English or anything else in the world, and had, moreover,

made far too good a recovery from her long wait to be silent on any point. So untroubled by any of Jason's remonstrances, she babbled away the whole time he was speaking.

"Very well," Jason at last concluded, "I am, of course, of the opinion that it is quite unnecessary. But if you insist on it, then I will—just to put your mind at rest—go and see Kossling and gently find out how the wind blows—so much I will do to please you. But excuse me now, I really must look through the correspondence."

And as Jason spoke he—without allowing himself to be drawn into any further discussion—escorted Aunt Rika to the door, her flow of conversation still continuing when she was half-way to the street and her nephew long since deep in the study of a communication from Banke & Tulpental in Frankfort, stating that their order had been for red spots on a yellow serge ground and not for yellow crosses on a moss-green satin.

And whilst his aunt, quite cheerful again now after having relieved her feelings, was still at Bolzani's making up for the delay in her well-earned morning meal, Jason started with a feeling of sad depression to visit Dr. Kossling. It is true he did not really believe that there was any understanding between Hetty and Kossling, yet he was obliged to own that such a thing lay within the bounds of possibility, since these two were by no means badly matched in their whole personality. For the somewhat quiet and dreaming, slightly passive nature, an inheritance from her mother's family that distinguished Hetty from the rest of the Geyberts with their temperament of never-failing self-expression, would doubtless make her more in touch with Kossling's inner life than he could believe he himself had ever been.

Jason said this to himself as he walked along, turning over in his mind how he could frustrate any further meeting of the two without being either impolite or tactless. For if there was anything serious between



them—good heavens, what would be the end of it! Jason grew hot at the mere thought, and, regardless of his brand-new spats, of the rain and the puddles everywhere between the stones, regardless too of the water rushing down the gutters like a mountain torrent so that it could scarcely be crossed in one stride, he limped three or four times up and down in front of Kossling's lodgings, afraid to go up—like a child expecting to be scolded. He would have given a good deal not to find Kossling. At last, however, he had to go in.

Kossling lived in a small house in the New Friedrich Street, somewhat to one end towards the König dyke. Close to his window stood a row of elms and poplars overhanging the dark, narrow current of the slowly moving water and above which one could catch a glimpse of the stone figures of the Colonnades. But between trees and house a strange little garden was wedged in, amongst dwellings and courtyards, with a few overgrown paths and bushes that put on their leaves earlier and put them off later than any others in all the land, with a patch, too, of broad-leaved clover and coltsfoot instead of the grass of former days. The rusty gate was always locked and no one ever went in except that once Kossling had seen an old woman sitting there in an easy chair, evidently too ill to walk any farther. But that was some time ago, and since Kossling did not see her again and the garden remained just as quiet and neglected, he concluded that the old woman had by now found a better place. To tell the truth, the best of Kossling's room was its outlook on to the leaves or, in winter, on to the network of bare boughs. It was on this account he had rented it, for its interior had no special points in its favour. It was only an oblong room with brightly distempered walls and a floor so old and decayed that there were great gaps between the boards. It was but scantily furnished with a few heavy pieces of old French design, a bed in the corner—with a canopy and thick curtains—big

enough to stow away a whole troop of grenadiers, an arm-chair in the centre as immovable as a boulder of rock, upholstered in black leather and rows of white buttons—a throne and afternoon resting-place in one—and a table fortress in the window where piles of books built ramparts with a full system of loopholes and battlements, and which was so placed that the right hand should not cast a troublesome shadow on the page of manuscript.

Kossling used to work at the table looking on to the green outside ; there, too, he swallowed his silent, cheerless meals, when he used to prop up his book against the inkpot far off in the middle of the table and devour the words with greedy eyes. A few wooden chairs with tall, thin, curved legs and dainty openwork backs did not enter into any competition with the antediluvian pieces, but stood in the corners like children in disgrace ; even the lithographs in little grained birchwood frames on the wall—Blume as Don Juan and Sonntag of Dondorf as Selika in *Oberon*—showed the same modest demeanour in common with the four little silhouettes of school friends that hung opposite in their narrow gold frames.

Bed, easy chair and table, divided between them the sole and absolute rule of the white-walled room with its decaying floor and fluttering, thin muslin curtains.

Kossling disliked them for their lack of pleasant sociability, for they always acted as if they did not see him or treated him with supreme condescension. If it had not been for the green branches outside and the neglected little garden below he would have moved long since, but these two things almost brought about a reconciliation again whenever he had had a difference of opinion with table, bed or easy chair.

Jason Geybert found Kossling at home. For when it began to rain Kossling had been obliged, willy-nilly, to betake himself home at last. Until then he had been wandering about, Heaven knows where, the whole night through, not really master of his actions.



In the Zoological Gardens he had run against the trees, thrown his arms round them and talked to them ; then he had for at least half an hour followed some man until he had frightened him ; afterwards he had stood for a very long time in front of the Jagor gaming-house in the principal street and laughed contemptuously at all the crew still going in and coming out, filled with pride, because not one of the singers who passed him knew that he was a king in comparison with all those who threw away in one night more than he spent in a month. All the tenderness, too, of which he was capable had burst forth in words and found its highest expression in the one name of Hetty. Over and over again he tried to conjure up her picture—leaning against the orchard fence, crossing the courtyard in front of him, running away from him in the park, walking quite close in front of him on the meadow path, bending her head by the pond, and, last of all, tripping up the little wooden steps—whilst he, in the darkness, leant his head against a tree.

Sometimes he fancied he could still distinctly feel her warm breath against his cheek, and he looked to see if she was not walking by his side.

Then he would lose himself in long dreams of the future and picture their life together in all its sweet familiarity, at breakfast in the morning with Hetty, in a gay morning frock on the opposite side of the snowy tablecloth ; and on it he could see quite distinctly a glass dish of golden honey standing before him. Honey with his morning coffee had always been the first and foremost of his still unfulfilled desires, and now he laughed as he found himself longing for it once more.

Then again fear and oppression laid their heavy hands upon him and he cudgelled his brains to find out what he could do to win Hetty. He would carry her off home just as she was ; he would come as a rich man, full of renown, and break down all opposition ; he would write comedies—little things

that people would act everywhere—that would bring in some money. And already in fancy he began to plot out little trifles. Then, all at once, he was sure that Hetty would never see him again, because he was not good enough for her, and to this he indeed assented, so that he had not a single thought of resentment, but only gratitude for the fleeting gift of her beauty. At last—as he wandered in more and more distant and unfamiliar streets—he reached devious and distant domains of his mind until to end with, here as there, in the outer as in his inner world, he no longer had any idea where he was. As soon as it began to rain he turned his face homewards, but when at last he had groped his way up, grey dawn was peeping into his room and Kossling had no longer any desire to go to bed then.

He unbuttoned his coat, sat down in the arm-chair with his cheek pressed against its cold, black leather, and slept for a short couple of hours—a refreshing, almost dreamless slumber. When he once more rubbed his eyes into wakefulness, he was gay in a moment and had left the wakeful night and its anxious thoughts far behind him.

For Kossling belonged to those people who never grow tired. Everything physical was quite a secondary consideration with him; whether he got enough to eat or had to go hungry, whether he had money in his pocket or scarcely one copper to rub against another, was really not of vital importance to him and he made nothing of it.

He ought to have had some strenuous work as his calling in life—from morn till eve behind the plough, at the anvil or on horseback; that would have suited him, for he was just made for such hard work, but in his present state he was like nothing but a dagger in its sheath. All his desires and actions were but the overflow of unused power, and that often made him peevish and depressed, irresolute and moody.

Now, on this morning, he felt the burden of it doubly heavy. As long as he alone was affected



he did not feel responsible to anyone. After all, what did he matter! But, suddenly, that was all changed, and now, for the first time, he felt the heavy responsibility of wasted years as a dark, evil shadow cast by his newly found happiness in the early sunlight.

In this state Jason Geybert found him.

They both felt equally awkward as they went towards each other, for hitherto they had always met in public, and Kossling had a shrewd suspicion as to the purpose of this visit.

He got up slowly from the table, on which stood his breakfast barely touched. He pushed it, his books and writing-paper a little to one side, as if to make some sort of order for his visitor, before he went to meet Jason.

"It is kind of you, Herr Geybert, to keep your promise to come and look me up. Will you sit down in the easy chair? Yes, I am really very pleased."

"No, my friend, I would rather join you at the table for a little. Just go on quietly with your business; I only came to see what you were doing. You have utterly disappeared lately, you know. . . . But what a nice lodging you have here; you must find the outlook on to the trees a help to your work; we always feel as if our thoughts come out of the trees or down from the sky—that I know."

Saying this, Jason, before Kossling could prevent him, had fetched one of the little, curved-leg chairs out of the corner, lifted it with one hand and placed it at the table in front of the books, paper and morning coffee.

"There," he said, sitting down with the slight jerky movement common to all cripples, "there, this is for me and that"—pushing the tray in front of Kossling again—"is for you. Now tell me a little about yourself. Why have you deserted me, I wonder?"

"I was at home for a while," Kossling answered, looking thoughtfully at the rain and minutely observing a shabby old sparrow mournfully perched with

dripping feathers on a projection of the wall. "I was at home for a few weeks."

"Well—and——?" Jason inquired, drawing out his interrogation as a confectioner does a long sugar-stick.

"No," Kossling answered, "I think not. What is the good of it? Every time I feel less at home there; I can't go back any more. I don't think anything will come out of it—and I shall be too old directly."

Jason looked gravely in front of him. "Perhaps you are right. What good would it be for you?"

So saying, he took up one of the books and turned over the leaves. "Well, and what else are you doing? But I won't ask you. We are always sailing in an unfavourable wind, and all we can do is to tack and hoist the little sails on our five-master, whilst the wind is never strong enough for our big, fine main-sail, which is only known to us and to no one else."

"Not that," Kossling remarked; "the wind is now quite strong enough." And he broke off with a flush.

Jason quite understood, but did not yet make for his goal. He lacked courage to carry out his difficult and trying errand, and intentionally deferred again and again the moment for beginning to speak about Hetty. He took up the books from the table, one after the other, talked about newspapers and ministers, about the King, the Academy pictures, about Hengstenberg and Eichhorn.

But Kossling remained silent and depressed. He was quite sure that Jason had come on Hetty's account, and he felt impelled to speak of her. It was her name alone that came to his lips, whatever the subject Jason was discussing, but again and again her name remained unuttered.

At last, however, when the conversation had almost come to a full stop, like the rain that had just abated outside, where the gnats' gentle, soft music was now only interrupted from time to time by the louder splashing of the drops in the roof gutters, and when



they both sat facing each other in awkward constraint, Kossling could no longer resist his desire to speak of Hetty.

At first his words were timid, hesitating, stammering, but then more and more eloquent and triumphant, whilst all the joy of his nature broke forth and shone through his words. And what they were powerless to say was disclosed by his excitement and the tone of his voice. When at last he was silent, his listener no longer needed to ask him anything.

Jason had not interrupted him, but had sat there stiff and mute with only a strange movement of his mouth, which Kossling did not know whether to interpret as mockery, indignation, pity or joy.

Nor if Jason Geybert had been asked, could he have answered himself. Perhaps it had a touch of them all—pity for the hopelessness of it all, indignation that Kossling did not notice the gulf that separated them, and contempt—a touch of the contempt that the calm, sober-minded person always feels for the dreamer—and, added to all, emotion and joy at the drama of young passion in which Jason had a share, for he felt as though Hetty, her very self, appeared in Kossling's words.

Kossling watched Jason's lips anxiously to hear his judgment, but he kept them firmly closed as if no word should ever escape them; then he got up and limped to and fro, to and fro, to and fro—always on a creaking, ill-fitting board—from the door to the window, from the window to the door, whilst Kossling leant against the table and gazed up at the grey rain-clouds. And he gripped the edge of the table tightly to steady himself, for his heart had suddenly failed him.

If only Jason would have spoken yes or no—no doubt he had his inner feelings of approval or dissent—but this silence and the continual clap, clap, up and down the boards oppressed him and broke his power to contradict; and still Jason Geybert kept on limping from door to window, from window to door.

Kossling stood with his back to him, his eyes fixed on the grey rain-clouds, on nothing but that dark wall above the tree-tops and the little stone figures of the Colonnades until he felt two great hot tears creeping down his cheeks.

At last, however, there stood Jason Geybert at his side. Yet Kossling still looked straight in front of him and never turned his eyes until Jason had finished—and Jason came to no speedy end.

He said he could not simply shake his hand and wish him happiness, for he was, to tell the truth, older and looked at things differently. He shared Kossling's joy, of course, fully and sincerely, and he could understand how that must fill his heart, must indeed be a guiding star whose light would never fail to brighten his life ; in very truth he would find in this such an overflowing measure of happiness as nothing could destroy : anything else that might happen would only sink away in it like a stone in the ocean. He was not too thick-skinned to understand and respect that, and, moreover, to feel its appeal.

Yet he must just say something else as well, something that would seem to Kossling hard and prosaic, and yet it had to be said. He assumed that Kossling's love for his niece was real and sincere and that he esteemed and revered her as well, so that he would waste no words on that, and for this very reason he hoped Kossling would agree with him. . . . "Hetty Geybert is not a girl to be flirted with. That, I am sure, is your full conviction too. And, Doctor, amongst us such a thing is not done. It would indeed be such a bad return for me and my brother that I feel sure that can never have been your intention."

"I personally shall not like you less after this, and, to tell the truth, I would quite gladly see you Hetty's husband ; that says a good deal, for I know no one else to whom I would give her. But the decision does not rest with me."

"Let us, dear Doctor, for a moment call a spade



a spade and give commonplace facts commonplace consideration. You are a promising young writer—isn't that so?—living a simple, unpretentious life, really apart from and a stranger to the world that you describe and criticise. You came into my brother's house, made my niece's acquaintance, and you both felt a mutual attraction. These are the simple facts. Yet, when all is said and done, you do not belong to each other. You do not belong to the life of the middle-class, and Hetty is so firmly planted in it that she cannot be uprooted.

"You were in the Castle Park only yesterday. Did you happen to notice by the castle the beautiful old hydrangea with its great heads of mauve blossoms?"

Kossling still kept his eyes fixed on the clouds and only answered by a very slight inclination of his head. He felt, indeed, now that he ought to be ashamed, that he had treated Jason Geybert in a criminal way or like a man of whom he had lately read who, after begging for a night's lodging, had on the next morning stolen his host's purse and watch; his own conduct, he felt, had been equally contemptible.

"Yes," continued Jason, "its quite unusual beauty attracted your attention. Would you take this plant—that is carried at every rough breeze into the conservatory—to plant it out in the forest? And do you think it would prosper there?"

Kossling shook his head.

"Well, you see, it is somewhat the same with Hetty, and all you can give her is forest soil, hard and stony. You caught a glimpse of my brother's house that evening—enough, perhaps, to write a novel about it—but, after all, you saw nothing. For, believe me, Hetty spends more on frocks and gloves in the year—and that without any discussion, solely as a matter of course—than you scrape together with much difficulty for your whole living. It is a simple necessity for her, and all that enchants you in her now would fade away if she had to sink into poverty

and anxiety. I think you have not told yourself this—if indeed you have told yourself anything.”

“If you really love my niece Hetty—and I take your word for it—then, for that very reason, you cannot assume this responsibility.”

Jason stopped here, as if expecting contradiction, and indeed it looked as though Kossling meant to speak, and made the effort, but not a sound came from his lips.

“Moreover, when you go to my brother on his return and speak to him, I can, alas, tell you now, in advance, his decision, for to all other obstacles is added the one other that you are a Christian.”

Kossling started.

“You think that we should be broad-minded enough to disregard this outer accident. Perhaps! But then you forget a certain pride, inherent in our family, that we are looked upon here and respected as Jews. If my father had allowed himself and us to be baptized, as he was so often urged to do, we might to-day have a title and be privy councillors. That we have not done so, nor crept to the Cross, nor in any way sold our convictions, whether for pleasure or profit, is our pride, and we would not have it relinquished by our family in the days to come. You can understand that, I am sure!”

Kossling bowed his head in grave and slow acquiescence.

“But, Kossling, although I can give you so little hope of success, rest assured that I wish you well and will do all in my power to help you and Hetty, for it no longer is a matter in which you alone are concerned. You may trust me; I know my own people better than you do, and if anyone at all can be of use to you, I am the man.”

“Yet one thing you must first promise me, Kossling, on your word of honour, as man to man. Until the decision has been made in your favour, you must not venture to approach Hetty again, either personally or by letter. If you will promise this, I, in return,



will promise to speak on your behalf and to do whatever lies in my power for you.

"If we are successful, then the pain of the short separation will be at once forgotten; if we fail, then it will be easier for you and Hetty, for every additional word and hour together would be a sin against Hetty.

"How you look at me, Kossling! But if you will think over it quietly, you will grant I am right.

"In a couple of days—at latest a week—my brother will be back again. At the first opportunity of a quiet talk with him, I will speak for you and Hetty."

Jason had said all this very quietly and slowly in a thoughtful, fatherly tone—he had endeavoured so to choose and order his words as to avoid all possibility of wounding Kossling.

As a matter of fact, Jason had not expected to hear what he had been told—at least he had not thought that Hetty and Kossling could have already turned their feelings for each other into words—and he faced his friend with an inward sense of hopelessness and desperation, whatever his outward quiet and calm might be. Nor was he by any means so full of hope as he now pretended; indeed, it was only that he would not own, even to himself, how sad he felt at this love affair between Hetty and Kossling, for both of whom he wished the best this world can offer.

He was surprised himself at the skill with which he had maintained the dignified pose of family uncle—for, in the depths of his mind, he heard very different words, far less guarded and far less reasonable, that repeated again and again: "If only you love each other—if only you love each other. . . ."

"Then I have your promise, Doctor," Jason inquired, as Kossling still did not answer.

"Will you really do that, Herr Geybert? Really—really—and do you think—do you think it . . .?" Kossling exclaimed.

Jason shrugged his shoulders. "You have my word, you know, Kossling; whatever lies in my power

shall be done. But who can know the result, dear friend? Now think of what you have promised me."

Kossling looked at him with entreaty in his eyes. "Dear Herr Geybert, must that really be?"

"Yes, I think so, if you do not wish to ruin any prospects of success that you may have. In any case, it would be nothing but expedient, even if diplomacy did not absolutely demand it."

And he held out his hand to Kossling, who, with some hesitation, grasped it.

Heaven knows he felt as if he would rather fall on Jason's shoulder and weep his heart out. Although for weeks and months now he had been brooding over this, he felt, all at once, that he had really thought of nothing at all and that all Jason had said to him was new and strange, for he had never looked at it in that light.

Jason went on talking to him for a time; indeed, as soon as he thought that all might end well he became almost confidential—an attitude very rare in him—but the moment the opposite conviction gained the upper hand his manner grew cool and formal again directly.

He told Kossling he must not creep away from him any more, that they must see one another more often, and he proposed to fix a time when they could always meet: at Kranzler's, Steheli's, Bolzani's, Drucker's—wherever Kossling pleased. He would have more leisure now, and surely it wasn't right that two people who had so much in common should see so little of each other.

His quick, gay words showed plainly enough that Jason was anxious to turn Kossling's thoughts into another channel, but the latter's speech always flew back again to the one topic: Hetty. He wanted to hear a hundred things about her from Jason; but Jason gave evasive answers, knowing, as he said to himself, that he could not reconcile it with his position as uncle to fan the flame of a passion that had not so far received the family's approval.



At last he took his leave, giving Kossling to understand that in his absence everything went topsy-turvy at Solomon Geybert & Co's., and that it was high time he returned, like Odysseus of old, weapon in hand, to punish all offenders.

As he stumbled down the dark, narrow staircase, the words of the high priest, Aaron, suddenly shot through his mind : " Li onauchi ki adabair " (" Who am I that I should speak ! "). It was with a very heavy heart—for the conversation had been a great strain—no longer humming and whistling as in the morning, but with his eyes fixed in deep thought on the pavement, that Jason limped past the houses to Louis Drucker's.

Here, in the midst of the guests' loud laughter—it was one of Drucker's good days and he was holding forth at length about the last dog-races in his garden near Potsdam, when he had handicapped the quickest dog by hanging round his neck a complete edition of Joel Jacobi's works, bound in pigskin—in the midst of the noise, Jason, whilst drinking a bottle of Chambertin, took out his silver pencil-case and scribbled a note to Rika, in which he informed his sister-in-law that on this occasion her prophetic gift had led her astray and that consequently from now on he nevermore intended to follow her lead.

For Jason said to himself that, in any case, Rika would have the chance of a long tête-à-tête with her husband before he could—and he was anxious that Solomon should not be biassed beforehand.

Kossling, meantime, was sitting in his room, his elbows on the table and his hands pressed against his temples, gazing fixedly at the pages of the letter he would now not send to Hetty. Yet he had so much to say to her that he had forgotten and for which he thought he had had no time the day before. Hope and despair alternated in him like heat and cold in a fever patient. Kossling felt that in a moment all had been changed ; what had been his own most private possession was now a ball for everyone to

kick, desecrated and soiled by people who had, truth to tell, no concern at all with it and whom he regarded with complete indifference, if not with aversion. And the worst of it was that Hetty's picture lost some of its charm, in consequence of this interference, as she slowly slipped out of his hands and returned to those others ; but this was only momentary, and then he felt he must seek pardon for such blasphemy on his knees and once more resumed his worship with the word : " Hetty." Towards evening he got up, went to Spandau Street and waited for Jason outside Geybert & Co's., to ask him if his brother was still not back from his journey and if he had still not had a talk with him. At the same time he meant to ask Jason to release him from his promise. Yet, although he waited and waited, and book-keepers, apprentices, clerks and porters came, still there was no Jason, and one of them, in answer to Kossling's inquiry, said that Herr Jason was never at business in the afternoon.

" But no doubt everything will be different again when the old man is back by the end of next week."

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But Solomon came—not a soul knew why—sooner than they expected ; no later than Saturday forenoon, although it had been said that he would not be back before the middle of the next week. He drove straight up to his business premises, handed Jason a breastpin with a mosaic of little brown, green and white stones representing—according to the owner's fancy—a dog's head, a landscape or a basket of flowers ; moreover, he presented him with a beautiful drinking-cup of red Bohemian glass, with pictures stamped out on it. The Louisa, Franz, Salt and Meadow springs, as well as the bath-house, were each represented in a circle for general admiration, one and all of them little temples with cupolas, numerous small windows and pillars like so many toothpicks, and on the other side there was even imprinted in deep



lettering : " Jason Geybert," and underneath : " In Karlsbad, see, I thought of thee ! " It was a splendid exemplar of drinking-cups—quite two pounds in weight—and between brothers worth at least three thalers and eight heavy groschen.

It was a present to delight every Karlsbad visitor, but for Jason, who had no interest in or liking for either Karlsbad, Marienbad, Franzensbad, Schlangenbad or Elster, it was a trifle inappropriate. All the same, Jason said he thought it was a wonderful cup—he loved red glass ; he had long wished for something like that, and he would keep the cup on his writing-table for his spills, so that he would always have it under his very eyes.

Solomon at once plunged headlong into business talk, wanted to know hundreds of things of which Jason was completely ignorant, had a number of complaints and grievances about things forwarded to Leipzig, and in such a mood Jason would not trouble him with Kossling, seeing, as he told himself, that it would be much better and more conducive to success to choose a quieter hour for this subject. Jason could not discover whether Solomon knew about it already, but he was inclined to think he did. It is true Solomon never said a word to lead to this conclusion, but Jason had a firm conviction that it was correct.

As he sat opposite Solomon, Jason became conscious for the first time of the difficulty of the mission he had undertaken ; for although there was never any disagreement between the two brothers, yet as a result of the difference in age between them and the long years that Solomon had run in double harness, they could not fail to grow apart. And in this particular matter Jason could only reckon on a favourable hearing if he met with complete understanding. But when he recognised the gravity in Solomon's face, whilst he, turning over the pages of the order and dispatch-books as if God had first created the firm of Geybert & Co., and then, after that, everything else in this

world—when he saw that, it seemed to Jason, after all, exceedingly doubtful whether his intercession for Hetty and Kossling would have a successful issue.

In any case, he would wait for a more propitious hour.

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Towards midday, Hetty was sitting at the window and two butterflies were playing before her eyes down in the front garden, round the monkshood, stretching its stiff blue flower-stalks out in the sunshine. Suddenly, however, one flew off, hurried over to the yellow-green lime-tree, mounted from branch to branch in slow hesitation, yet enticed by the sweet scent, until at last it soared into the sky, hanging like a bright and dazzling polished steel shield above the tree. But the other fluttered a couple of times over the blue bush until it ended its search by hanging on to some blossom and sipped its nectar.

Hetty watched them with a strange sensation which she could not herself understand, and as she chanced to look up, Uncle Solomon was just latching the little wooden gate behind him and the carriage that had brought him was just about to drive back.

He was wearing a thin English travelling-cape and a grey peaked cap; looked very sunburnt, fresh and young as he greeted Hetty with a broad smile. Hetty, in her delight, called out his name so lustily that Aunt Rika, taking her after-dinner snooze in the red room, sprang up in alarm and stuck out of the window into bright sunlight a puffy, drowsy face, a white nightcap and a lace-trimmed bedjacket; when she saw Solomon standing close to her in the wooden porch she did not know for the moment whether she was awake or still dreaming.

What confusion followed, what kisses and questions in the passage between the brightly and lightly clad Aunt Rika, Hetty and the gentleman, who looked like an English lord, all under the eye of Frau Konnecke, who was surveying the scene through the



peep-hole in her own door. And Solomon had almost to force his way through the doorway, so impeded was he on every side by Aunt Rika's flabby, capacious form.

Hetty told the maid and went into the kitchen herself to make the coffee and add a little sal volatile to it. For as her uncle had been in Karlsbad it was only natural he should be a little spoilt as regarded coffee; indeed, if he had not since been in Leipzig, there would have been no satisfying him. So it had become a household tradition that, every year, Hetty should come to the rescue and by slow degrees accustom Uncle Solomon once more to the family brew.

As Hetty, mindful of this, was without delay disappearing into the kitchen, her uncle called after her not to be too long with the coffee as he must go back to business "at once."

Aunt Rika raised an emphatic protest, but Solomon satisfied her by explaining that where so much had been neglected he was afraid he would lose his best customers if the goods were not dispatched that day or on Monday.

When Hetty returned, her aunt had a new lace shawl over her shoulders and on her own place lay a bright pink card-box stationery-case, imprinted with a delicate ornamentation of butterflies, tendrils, cupids and birds. On opening it she found inside some dozen sheets of writing-paper, each adorned with a fine little steel engraving in a tiny frame of flowers: a basket of fruit, a lover on his knees offering a bouquet to his fair lady, a maiden with a sweet expression dreaming over her lover's letter or pen in hand and the same sugary expression, thinking of the writer, two children carrying flowers, and a dog with a basket in his mouth running before them—all very pretty and good engravings in their stamped garlands of white flowers.

Hetty thanked him and said she would put it away carefully—it would be a terrible pity to spoil such

paper by writing on it ; but Uncle Solomon replied she must not do that—perhaps she could use it, and he would be very glad if a speedy opportunity came for her to send off such fine and delicate letters.

Aunt Rika sat by in silence, but with her eyes that plainly said : “ God grant it ! ”

This embarrassed Hetty, but, at the same time, gave her a gleam of hope. Indeed, if her uncle had not had so much to tell of old and new acquaintances, of social gatherings and the summer theatre—which was almost as good as the Theatre Royal—she would have told him all that was in her heart, no matter whether her aunt was there or not. But no such opportune opening came again ; for, before they had got really warmed up, and before the great Meissen coffee-pot had poured its last drop, Uncle Solomon pulled out his watch and asked if Hetty would be good enough to see if his cab was at the gate.

When Hetty brought word back that it was, Uncle Solomon at once got up—in spite of Aunt Rika, who thought it a most uncomfortable arrangement—and Hetty went with him to the carriage door, for Aunt Rika, always somewhat slow in the mysteries of her toilet, had not meanwhile found time to fit herself for the public eye, so could only watch Solomon's departure from her bedroom window.

As Uncle Solomon stepped into the cab, he patted Hetty's cheek in fatherly fashion, once more saying he would try not to be too late coming back and meantime she must go a good long walk, for she did not look at all as though she had been having a seven weeks' summer holiday in Charlottenburg, but rather as though she never came outside her cellar in some back street.

Hetty answered with a laugh that she did not think it was so bad as that, but she slept so badly now, perhaps because the nights were so hot.

All afternoon, right up to the evening, Hetty sat at the window, watching, as keenly as a little dog waiting for his master, the road from Berlin, and



thinking that every carriage appearing under the trees on the high road was certainly the same as came at midday. But each one invariably drove past, until at last Uncle Solomon, who had taken one of the suburban cabs at the City Gate, was standing in the garden again without her having seen him come.

At supper Uncle Solomon was full of tales of Karlsbad, and Aunt Rika hastened to fill up the scanty pauses with Berlin news. Hetty would never have believed what a number of insignificant people could within seven weeks get engaged, marry, come into money or die and in addition find time to commit crimes of every description, from forgery on parents, adultery, daughters' questionable visits to the country, down to quite simple and ordinary mortal sins.

In this conversation, therefore, there was not the least chance or opportunity for Hetty ; not the slightest opening she could utilise and develop further. And before she knew where she was her uncle and aunt had got up to say good night, for Uncle Solomon explained that he had had a strenuous day and began to notice such exertion more than he used.

But his weariness could not, after all, have been so far-reaching, for as Hetty sat at the window in her bedroom, still lit up by the last gleams of daylight, looking into the silvery foliage around or lifting dreamy, anxious eyes to the dark tree-tops or to the pale-green sky of this moonlit summer evening, she heard the two talking together for hours in the next room. No ordinary talk it seemed to her, no simple communication, but consideration of some question, an excited discussion in which neither of them talked for long together, but each constantly interrupted the other. Hetty could perhaps have heard what it was all about if she had listened, but that she would not do. So only a word or broken phrase reached her ear from time to time as she heard the names of Jason and Julius, her own and Kossling's—she had not made a mistake—Kossling's ; but then the voices sank to a low whisper, her uncle gave

a long, loud yawn, the pauses grew longer, and at last the conversation melted into a few single, weary words, until Hetty was left alone to silence and the bright summer moonlight.

Then Hetty got up from her window-seat and, as she undressed, she firmly resolved to speak to her uncle and was quite pleased at the plan of campaign which occurred to her of going a walk with him early next day in the park or garden, and then, when walking at his side, without needing to look at him, she would quite calmly tell him everything—and Uncle Solomon would certainly take her part; he would be sure to go a walk with her, for the next day was Sunday, the day when he had always done so.

For the first time for many a long day Hetty slept soundly and peacefully.

Uncle Solomon and Aunt Rika came later than usual to breakfast, where Hetty was waiting on tenter-hooks to ask her uncle to go a walk. But Aunt Rika began by saying that Hetty must make all preparations for visitors to dinner and possibly for the afternoon and evening as well. Ferdinand would be certain to come, Jason and Uncle Eli too, perhaps; nor was it impossible that they would also see Julius. What should she give them? Pigeons? There was nothing on these, nor was goose anything very grand. Aunt Rika was inclined to have saddle of mutton and ducks, something a little out of the ordinary. Perhaps Frau Konnecke would let her use her kitchen fire as well, and Hetty must see if she could not get some really good fruit; she must order a cherry cake and whipped cream at Weise's as well as pastry shapes for their own preserved fruits; and they must get some more table beer too.

Hetty answered she would do all this, but first she would like to go a little stroll in the park and she would be so glad if uncle would come too, as he always used to, for she had seen nothing of him yet.

But Aunt Rika asked quite sharply whether it was she or Hetty who had married her husband. "Oh,



Aunt Rika," Hetty replied, "I never meant to dispute your right to uncle, but I thought it would be so nice."

"Another day, Hetty," her uncle interposed. "You see, I shall be staying here some time yet."

"Oh, Uncle, do?" Hetty pleaded.

"But, Hetty," her aunt exclaimed in her shrillest tones, "whatever are you thinking about? When do you imagine they will come? Ferdinand won't be a minute later than twelve o'clock, and you know he is unendurable all day if he does not get his dinner by half-past."

"But I should so like——" Hetty again ventured to make her modest protest.

"Did ever anyone hear the like?" Rika asked more as a burst of eloquence than with any expectation of a reply, and repeated with an indignant shake of her muslin cap: "Did ever anyone hear the like?"

"But, my child," Uncle Solomon inquired, coming to his wife's support, "do you expect your aunt to do it all by herself?"

"Very well then—very well—I will stay at home." And Hetty, nearer to tears than laughter, got up from her chair.

"But won't you have your breakfast, dear Hetty?"

Hetty did not answer her aunt as she went out of the room.

Solomon and Rika looked at one another, Solomon with only a nod, but Rika's eyes plainly asked: "Now, Solomon, do you think I was wrong?"

\* \* \* \* \*

And Aunt Rika was to be right in everything . . . for, not merely at twelve o'clock, but sharp on the stroke of half-past eleven, not one, but two carriages—a large four-seated landau and a pretty little one-horse phaeton—stopped at the corner of Rosinen Street. In the yellow landau, drawn by a pair of chestnut horses, the seat of honour was completely

filled by the ample forms of Ferdinand and Janey. In celebration of Solomon's return Ferdinand's spirit of enterprise had persuaded him to don white nankeen trousers and put a new English straw sailor hat on his head, which had already been subjected to its usual summer shave. Janey, too, was in white, a white crêpe with a low neck, trimmed with pale-blue flowers, and her head was covered by a yellow straw hat with blue strings to match the flowers; blue, so Aunt Janey thought, had always been her colour, but Aunt Minnie maintained that her niece Janey ought to be at least twenty years younger to wear blue. Nor had she grown any thinner lately.

Max and Wolfgang occupied the opposite seat, the former with the calm indifference of some royal invader surveying a conquered town with the victor's pride, and the latter, pale and tearstained, for he and Jenny had waged a war of succession as to their respective rights to the throne beside John the driver. Jenny, thanks to her father's interference, which was always in favour of his daughter rather than of his sons, had come off victorious, whilst Wolfgang had been defeated with great loss and literal heavy blows.

In the second little carriage, with its cream-coloured steed, some few yards behind the first, Eli and Minnie were seated. Eli, with a large umbrella in his hand, a blue one with a rattan handle and big yellow knobs at the end of every rib, kept up a continual flow of annoyed and angry grumbling over the wretched spavined jade Ferdinand had set to draw their carriage, a creature that might be put to drag potatoes, but certainly not honest folk. His neighbour kept on nudging him all through the drive to be quiet, for those in front could hear every word, but Eli was not to be dissuaded: it was, he said, an insult and a scandal.

The narrow flap-seat was occupied by Jason, who had been strangely silent all the time and sometimes had even caught himself repeating his thoughts aloud



in an undertone ; but, as the crowning point, up on the box-seat the new cousin Julius sat in all his glory sideways on the tiny corner free, with one leg almost outside on the low step. He busied himself explaining to the stableman how he ought to drive ; no one knew how, here in Berlin, but he ought to see for once how they drove where he lived, then he'd be astonished indeed !

When the carriages stopped at Uncle Ferdinand's order, the visitors all got down and out, according to their various seats, ages and temperaments, the young legs quick and agile, the old feeling their way with slow caution, everyone stretching arms and legs and getting used to their own feet once more, whilst Ferdinand instructed the drivers where to put up and to look well after the horses.

When Hetty, inside the house, heard the confusion of voices, she took off her apron and ran to meet it ; as she threw open the door they were all thronging up the little wooden stair, Uncle Eli, the big blue umbrella in his hand, first of all, then Minnie in black silk, Ferdinand and his flock, and last of all, Jason and the new cousin.

The sight of the whole company together was a slight shock to Hetty, but then she thought that, after all, there would be enough for everybody.

" Good morning, ladies and gentleman ! " she exclaimed quite gaily, for the busy morning's work had done her good.

" Good morning, Hetty ; welcome to the green fields ! " roared Ferdinand as he slapped his white nankeen trousers.

" Well, Uncle Eli," Hetty teased in good-humoured fun, " you've brought a big enough umbrella ! "

" Because it's going to rain, my daughter," Eli answered very gravely.

" Oh no," returned Hetty incredulously, glancing at the calm blue sky.

" Well, if I tell you it is, you can rely on it."

" First, then, I've had my rheumatic pains ; secondly,

I always look at the barometer at Petitpiere's . . . and if it stands at 'set fair' I know it will rain; and thirdly, my daughter—as you will have read yourself too—the pyrotechnist Böhme advertises a monster firework display to-night in The Tents. Did you ever know it not rain then? What do you say now, Hetty?"

But Hetty had no time to answer before the others came crowding round her.

Jenny wanted to kiss Hetty and snuggled up to her at once—she was almost up to her shoulder already. Ferdinand at once took advantage of an uncle's privileges. Aunt Minnie was too much taken up with her own affairs to give Hetty any formal greeting. "Hetty," she exclaimed, "I tell you it's absolutely impossible to live with that man!" But on her lips that meant as much as any "good morning."

Aunt Janey said that Hetty looked wonderfully blooming, but she forgot to take the heat of the kitchen-fire into account. Max and Hetty avoided each other at first, remembering their last encounter. Wolfgang came up too, and Hetty started to see the green pallor of the boy's face.

"Would you have him, Hetty?" Ferdinand exclaimed, thinking he was making a reproof and joke combined, one well deserved by Wolfgang for laying claim to a place on the box-seat.

"Yes, of course he can stop at once with me," Hetty answered, drawing the boy to her side. "Would you like to?"

"Well, I've no objection," Janey said in a tone as if she was doing Hetty a special favour.

"Agreed," Hetty answered. "You shall stay with me from now on. I'll manage to find a corner for you. But now, ladies and gentlemen, I must beg you to go, first of all, into the garden. Uncle and aunt are there, in the summer-house."

"Just listen to Hetty," Jason exclaimed, "with manners like any court lady-in-waiting."



"Oh, good morning, uncle."

"Well, how are you, my dear friend?" asked Jason, as he tapped her on the cheek.

"Oh, quite well, thank you," Hetty answered slowly, fixing an inquiring look on Jason.

But when Jason avoided her eyes Hetty's heart sank with fear.

"Now, beautiful Cousin Hetty, will you permit me also to greet you. I have been wanting to come out to see you before this, but a merchant cannot always have the time at his disposal." With these words and a deep bow, the new cousin Julius pushed his way to Hetty, who was standing by the door to let the visitors pass by. Julius was attired in quite the English style, with a white waistcoat, a somewhat short bottle-green coat and a heavy linen neckcloth with red spots and a hard grey hat. Berlin evidently suited him; it had hammered him down into a still shorter, fatter and broader mould.

"Oh," replied Hetty, "I understand; no excuses are necessary."

Jason was still standing by them, as if waiting for something.

"After you, Herr Geybert," said Julius politely, making way for Jason to pass.

"After you," came the sharp retort, for Julius had annoyed Jason all the drive. "Besides, I hope I am less of a stranger here than you are."

The new cousin Julius smiled politely, as if he had been paid the most delicate compliment. For he had the laudable habit of being deaf to everything that might wound him, and so far he had found this of great help in getting on comfortably.

Hetty accompanied the caravan to the courtyard until she heard Ferdinand slap his nankeen trousers and greet Solomon and Rika as well with a shout of "Welcome to the green fields!" Then back she went to put on her apron again and to look after the roast as well as to give out everything required to the extra maid who was to help with the laying

of the tables and handing round the dishes . . . from the little white openwork china basket down to the Britannia metal spoons, for the silver was all in the iron safe at the business.

When Hetty had pricked the joint for the last time and said that it must be well basted, when she had once more tasted the thick soup, so full of suet dumplings that there was scarcely room for it to boil up between them, when she had put another pinch of salt and pepper into the salad to give it a little more flavour and had made sure that the whipped cream was in a cool place—for it was a really hot day—she went out to summon them all. But first she begged Frau Konnecke to be so good as to put up tables on the grass in front of the acacias and to make some seats out of tree-stumps and boards, whilst dinner was going on, for they would like to have coffee out there afterwards.

Jenny and Wolfgang were not to be found, but at last they discovered them quite hidden amongst the gooseberry and currant bushes. Ferdinand, in no measured terms, informed them that it was not permissible to gather fruit in other people's gardens and most certainly not if it was unripe, for in the first case they might, it was true, not be seen, but in the second, evil consequences were sure to follow. Jason, too, had wandered off into some corner or other and came up at Hetty's summons with a couple of long-topped carrots which he had pulled up. Hetty was just going to ask him about Kossling when the new cousin Julius darted forward to ask if he might take her in to dinner.

At the head of the procession Uncle Eli walked once more, still grasping his blue umbrella, and Aunt Janey brought up the rear with Solomon and Minnie. She was quite limp with heat, and asserted that she had never before felt it so hot in the country, but no doubt the garden was to blame for that, as the drive had been quite pleasantly cool and breezy. Here, however, she couldn't breathe, the air was so



oppressive. She, at any rate, did not like the place, and had always preferred Schöneberg.

But Minnie interrupted her to remark that it struck her as a hundred times more genteel here than out there amongst the Schöneberg potato-folk—that word “potato-folk” Janey would never forgive her to all eternity—nor did she notice that it was the least hot, which was no wonder, for worthy Aunt Minnie had no flesh on her bones and was really as small, dry and shrivelled as any cricket of the field.

But Solomon asserted that since some liked one thing, some another, it was impossible to decide one way or the other.

A long table had been laid up amongst the gold-green shadows of the cool, half-dark dining-room, through whose wide-open windows the flies came buzzing in and the sound of fowls in their yard close by. Hetty, to make it cooler, had opened, on the other side of the passage, the door into her bedroom, so that the low branches of the chestnuts in the courtyard and the limes in the front beckoned to each other through the whole length of the house. She had brought up two long green sprays and laid them down the centre of the damask tablecloth and put whole bunches of blue monkshood on the table in the high cut glasses that lived, as a rule, on the top of the corner cupboard.

Uncle Eli was the first to come in—his umbrella, he left outside—and he was quite enthusiastic over Hetty’s arrangement; even at the Royal Hotel the table could not look better. Then Julius came to ask where Hetty was going to sit, but that, he was told, Hetty could not yet say.

Jason had stayed in the kitchen longer than was strictly necessary to wash the carrots which he meant—Heaven only knows why—to take home with him. For, even if he was occupied with serious matters to-day, that was surely no reason why he should be blind to beauty. In such matters Jason was not proud; he delighted in beauty wherever he found it,

even in a simple serving-maid. The others came slowly up in twos and threes, the first to take their seats being Jenny and Wolfgang, who, as a result of the common reproof dealt out to them in the garden, had forgotten any hostility arising from their rivalry for enthronement on the box-seat. Janey, however, had not crossed the threshold before she exclaimed that Hetty's bedroom windows must be shut—why, they might get apoplexy coming into such a draught, hot as they were from the garden—or even better shut the windows looking out on to the courtyard and so avoid the smell at meal-time.

But then Jason grew annoyed and said the breath of air would not hurt anyone and without it the heat would be unendurable. Eli interposed to ask if the courtyards in Benshen were sprinkled with eau-de-Cologne—he didn't notice any smell. Ferdinand also took part in the discussion, so that it almost looked as if the window question was to serve as a pretext for a family quarrel; but then the two maids came in with the tureens and they all quickly took their seats without giving another thought to the shutting of the windows. Jason had asked to sit by Aunt Minnie, but was only allowed on her left side, because, at dinner, as she said, she must look after her husband. Solomon sat beside Janey, Ferdinand next to Rika, Julius and Hetty together at one end of the table, whilst the children were seated at the other.

To-day they were quite amongst themselves—for of course Julius was one of the family—and there was no stranger who had to be considered by anyone in any way whatsoever.

Eli refused soup, remarking in an offended tone that hot soups were not served nowadays.

“Did you ever hear such a thing?” Minnie asked. “Jason, your uncle grows queerer every day. And have you noticed what he has on his head, some sort of lump? I declare it makes me quite anxious.”

“Oh,” Jason replied, with a glance at the little



raised boil on Eli's forehead, "that will go away again."

"My son," broke in Eli, who was to-day by no means so deaf as Minnie thought, but on the contrary hearing very well in the clear air. "My son, one thing I tell you, that when you come to grow old, you know, you need not be surprised if some fine day a little orange-tree grows on your head—that's the way of it."

Everyone laughed; even the new cousin Julius joined in from politeness, although he had not the faintest sense of humour.

"Well," said Solomon—and those who knew him could tell by his tone that his words had a double meaning—"I am told you have made yourself of great use in our business; that was indeed very kind of you."

"Yes, Herr Geybert," Julius answered politely; "everyone likes to learn where they can and I was anxious to get a little insight into the silk department. In Posen we handled lots of calico and Manchester goods—indeed, I should like to find the man who could teach me anything about them, but in silk goods——"

"Don't you think, Ferdinand," Aunt Rika purposely interrupted in a somewhat loud tone, "that Solomon looks exceedingly well? I always say: 'just like a real English lord.'"

"Well, that would be, then, the second English lord in our family."

"How do you mean?" Rika exclaimed in surprise, hoping to hear some interesting item of family history.

"Who is the first?"

"Don't you know then?"

"No!"

"But Rika!"

"I don't either," said Solomon.

"Well, Jason of course."

"Jason? Why Jason?" Minnie loudly inquired.

"Well," said Ferdinand after a considerable pause,

"isn't he a real Lord Byron? He limps, and all the womenfolk run after him."

There was a burst of laughter, especially from the children's end of the table, and Jenny stamped her feet with joy.

"Sit still," Ferdinand ordered, "or you'll get something to teach you how to behave." But no one could stop laughing at the joke that delighted them all—except Jason. For, although he might not dislike the mention of the second similarity—who does not enjoy the epic of his own success?—he was not at all pleased to be reminded of the first.

"Ferdinand," said Solomon, when the storm of applause had died down a little, "I advise you"—and Solomon chuckled again to himself—"to go to bed, for you'll not make a better joke than that to-day."

"Have you all heard," Eli began with a satisfied smile, "that my Minnie has got a deaf maid now?"

"Nonsense," interposed Minnie. "She is only a little hard of hearing; there's nothing remarkable in that."

"I think it's a very good thing," Eli went on. "Minnie can find fault with her to her heart's content, and she never hears a thing. The others all went for that reason; this one will stay."

Minnie sat there quite dumbfounded by this back-handed and unexpected attack on the part of her Eli.

"Well," she managed to say at last, "if she doesn't please you, she can, of course, go again."

"On the contrary, Minnie. She and I understand one another quite well. We only wink, and each of us knows what the other wants to say."

That was quite enough to strengthen Minnie in her conviction that deaf Augusta was no good, and that she must be got out of the house, since, as he himself quite calmly confessed, the creature ran after her Eli.

But as the maids were heard in the passage, bringing



in the next course, the conversation turned from the servant question to Wolfgang's health.

Rika said his staying with them could quite well be managed ; he need not drive back at all, but stay straight away that very evening, and his things could be sent the next day.

Ferdinand impressed upon Wolfgang that he ought to be grateful to him for allowing this, and he hoped Wolfgang would not repay his paternal kindness by giving any cause for complaint, out here in the country.

Jenny, however, felt hurt, and said how much she would have liked to stay.

"One after the other," Ferdinand said in a soothing tone, for he was always generous with other people's money.

Julius tried to talk to Hetty, but she was so taken up with other matters, and with keeping an eye on the maids, that she fell sadly short in her answers. Then, too, she had, during the soup course, accidentally caught sight of his stumpy fat fingers, and the quite natural aversion she felt for the new cousin Julius came over her again and almost choked her.

"How do you like this watch, dear cousin?" the new cousin Julius asked, as he pulled a clumsy silver watch with gold rim and dial out of his waistcoat pocket. "Do you see the bunch of roses on it? It was the prettiest I could find."

Hetty, who in all such things had inherited knowledge and good taste—for she, Eli, Solomon, Ferdinand and Jason all still wore watches from her grandfather's business, little enamelled time-keepers, set with pearls and with delicate miniature paintings on the tiny dials that excited great admiration—Hetty saw at first glance that this came from Baden Market, where such things were dumped in their thousands.

"Oh, very pretty," she said politely.

"Well, what do you think it cost?"

Hetty, unaccustomed to such questions, only shook her head with an indignation which, however, was

quite lost on Julius, who was far too pleased with himself to dream of the possibility of any criticism of his own person.

"You know," he went on, "I shouldn't buy such a thing as a rule offhand, but, you see, I have just lately had a stroke of good luck. Listen, Hetty; Zacharias, in König Street, had a sale a short time since—the man must have failed just as you came out here. As I went along König Street, and saw the bills outside, I thought: I'll just go in there. So I ask to see the man's stock—for, of course, I know exactly what will be of use to us in Posen—and get patterns of calicoes and wax-cloth, as well as telling them to keep the pieces a week for me. As I told you, I know, of course, what will be of use to us in Posen; so I send the patterns to my old chief and—well, to cut a long tale short, there were pieces that brought me in a net profit of five and seven thalers for each."

Jason had also been a listener to all this. "Do you remember, Hetty, our talk of yesterday evening?"

"Oh yes, every word," Hetty answered. "But do tell me, Uncle Jason, what is your friend doing?" Hetty's heart came into her mouth as she put the question.

Janey stretched her head forward in her curiosity to observe the two, for she was six places distant from Hetty.

"I have seen little of him lately," Jason replied indifferently, "but I hope very soon now we shall all get a sight of him oftener." As he uttered the last words his big grey eyes looked Hetty full in the face, so that Hetty felt the kindness in his glance and smiled gratefully.

Meanwhile, at the other end of the table, there had arisen an eager literary argument, in which Max was taking a leading part, as to which was the greater, Goethe or Schiller.

Max contended that Goethe had not been a great man, and consequently could not be a great poet.



His moral conduct especially. . . . "Do you hear the youngster, Janey? He talks as if he really knew something about it," interrupted Ferdinand; yet it was evident that he was proud of Max. "How he talks, to be sure!"

"Whilst Schiller's moral conduct was an example of stainless purity," Max continued in an instructive tone.

"Well," said Uncle Eli, who held his head on one side over the table to hear better, "how do you know that? Who kept an eye on it?"

"But everyone says so," Max answered the old gentleman with marked condescension.

"Now, Max, I'll tell you something." And Uncle Eli drew a note of interrogation in the air with his finger. "Schiller got on very well with the women—he even used to talk to them so that they could not understand a single word. Ask Jason."

Jason laughed aloud, and Hetty, too, joined in for the first time that day.

"Confusèd harmony from strings is torn,  
Like songs of seraphim in heaven new born,"

Jason recited with exaggerated pathos. "Now then, what about your Herr Schiller, Max?"

"No doubt he knows it," said Ferdinand, who, as father, did not care to have his son Max put to shame. "But, children, what are we going to do after dinner?"

"To begin with, there's something more to come," Rika exclaimed.

"Well, for my part, I can't eat anything at all in this heat, Ferdinand said, helping himself to three slices of saddle of mutton. He had already done full justice to the duck.

"Well," Eli remarked, "we can see, at any rate, that you force yourself not to be impolite."

"Thank you, Fräulein, I'll take a little more," said Julius, stopping the maid, who would have come to him in any case. "Fräulein Hetty, I have had nothing

so far to-day but a little bit of bread and a drink of 'green huntsman.' "

But Hetty gave him no answer, and went on talking to Jason about the books he had lent her. She wanted him to take some back, and could she have some others? This new cousin Julius really bored her terribly! To be sure, he was no concern of hers, but she did wish she could get rid of the unpleasant feeling he always gave her, a feeling as of something cold and wet, just as she felt at the touch of a frog or a smooth green caterpillar. "Ah," interposed the new cousin Julius. "If I didn't mean to bring you some books; I had put them all ready, dear Hetty."

Dear Hetty, however, still gave no reply, and went on talking to Jason.

"What a fine cherry cake," Aunt Janey remarked, putting a large piece on Wolfgang's plate. "You would never think it came from Charlottenburg."

Solomon was talking again about the grand English acquaintances he had picked up in Karlsbad, and Eli was abusing the "pietists." In his young days there was nothing of the kind; the old Emperor Frederick had long since sent Hengstenberg packing to his proper place. He used always to think the world moved on, but he found it was always going back instead.

Ferdinand and Max protested against this, and said everything showed progress. They now had English gas and manufactured mineral water and modern oil lamps—the railway Ferdinand passed over without mention—and the national guard and conscription. "Yes, no doubt," said Eli, "it's just the same as with the English steel pens. They are perhaps cheaper than quills, and perhaps more durable as well—but people can't write properly with them."

Eli could afford to say that, for, in spite of his eighty years, he still wrote such an artistic and flowing hand that it was a pleasure to see it.

Julius told how he had now bought some things of Glasbrenner's for himself: *The Raree-Show of Eighteen Hundred and Thirty-nine, Herr Buffey's Finest*



*Day*, as well as *The Picnic to French-Buchholz*, because everyone made such a fuss about them—but they hadn't managed to make him laugh.

Jason said he thought there was a certain popular humour in all these things—humour of a very rough kind perhaps, yet very effective too, and if Glasbrenner had been of a little finer make and more artistic with his natural gifts he would have been a humorist of great style. But the great attraction in these volumes for him personally lay in Hosemann's covers and copper etchings, which were much more notable and valuable than all Glasbrenner's books put together.

Hetty said that Brennglas had always greatly amused her, and especially *The Berlin Flower Oracle*.

F.—Fennel.

“Gentle tailor, let your flattery go,  
Or soon you'll get from me a 'no.'”

Jason and Hetty laughed at this, and repeated as duet :

“Gentle tailor, let your flattery go,  
Or soon you'll get from me a 'no.'”

But Hetty intercepted a look of disapproval from Aunt Rika, not, however, meant for her, but for the new cousin Julius, and she understood more than she liked.

“Now,” asked Solomon, “excuse me, but is anything more coming?”

“Not here,” Hetty told him, “but we shall be taking coffee, of course, later on, in the garden.”

“Oh dear,” Janey exclaimed, “then such disgusting caterpillars fall in one's cup; and besides, it is much cooler here.”

“We have no caterpillars in the garden,” Hetty answered, and I have already had the tables laid on the lawn.

“I tell you, Janey, you always want something changed,” Ferdinand exclaimed in a tone of disapproval as he rose from his chair.

Minnie was annoyed. "Such a person," she muttered to Jason. Nothing is elegant and good enough for her here, yet if you go to her house, you may thank your stars if she even gives you carrot preserve." Minnie never forgave Janey for the carrot preserve she had once put before her.

"Well," Ferdinand again inquired, "what shall we do this afternoon?"

"I propose a rubber in the summer-house," Solomon answered.

"I'll have a little nap first," Eli remarked.

"Where can I do that here, Hetty?"

"Oh, you will go with us into the Castle Park afterwards, won't you?" coaxed Jenny.

"May I join you then, Fräulein Hetty?" Julius put in. "I don't know the park at all."

"I think you will be more needed at the whist-table."

"I never play cards, on principle," Julius retorted. If I did sit down at the card-table, it would only be to lose my time and my money. Did you ever know a card-player come to much in life? I never did. We had one in Person, a young man, a fellow-apprentice of mine."

Then up came Jason.

"Now," Hetty begged, "do tell me a little more what your friend is doing now."

Jason looked at her with a laugh.

"Can't you tell me that?" And then he patted her cheek. "Hetty, Hetty, if only that turns out well."

Hetty looked down with flaming cheeks.

"Well, we shall see later on, we shall see," Jason added in a kindly tone.

Hetty lifted her head again, although her eyes were full of tears, but then they were joined by Janey, who came out of the front room.

"Quite nice," she said, panting with heat, "quite nice your rooms here, but decidedly cramped."

Uncle Eli came once more. "Do tell me, Hetty, where I can get a nap here."



Hetty took him to her uncle and aunt's room, where he had the choice of a couch or an arm-chair. Eli took off his white wig with great care, hung it over a chair-back, drew a skull-cap out of his pocket and put it on his bald head. This done, Hetty had scarcely time to cover him up with a travelling-rug before he had dozed off with his mouth open, "only for a few minutes," as he said, half asleep already.

Outside in the garden, which lay green and golden in the sunshine under the pale-blue afternoon sky, the visitors scattered in different directions, the children marched off to the fruit again, and quickly disappeared in the close rows of raspberry-canec and gooseberry-bushes, where their presence was only betrayed by their joyous voices and Jenny's light frock, shining through the bushes.

Janey, Rika and Minnie had found very quiet, comfortable seats in the summer-house with Eli ; Ferdinand was strolling up and down with Julius ; Max had attached himself to Jason, to tell him that very shortly he was going to give him something valuable of his to read. Hetty, however, had enough to do to get the coffee-table as it should be ; for Frau Konnecke and Emily had set it full in the sun, and she now had to have it brought up to the bushes into the shade again. Then, too, she went with a pair of scissors, cutting off sprays of wild rose to strew over the linen tablecloth. For the wild roses had been out some days now, and the round bushes were covered with the delicate pink blossoms. In addition, it also fell to Hetty's lot to see that enough bottles of light beer were put in the tub of water by the summer-house, that the cards, markers, cigars and liqueurs were brought out, aniseed for the ladies, Benedictine, curaçoa and cognac as well, so that there was something to suit every individual taste. And, lastly, she had to wrap up the ice in a tablecloth and put tall glasses and lemons in readiness for lemonade. There was plenty for her to do. She had, too, to rearrange

the cut cakes on their dishes, for Hetty would not like to put them on the table as they were sent by Weise ; the cream also had to be poured out into their own crystal bowls, as she thought the confectioner's moulded glass dishes looked too poor and common.

When Hetty had finished this, she went round collecting them all from their several corners, and as soon as she knew they were somewhere near the tables, she dispatched the maids down the garden with the great Meissen coffee-pots, whilst she went on to wake Eli, who started up quite dazed.

Janey said she couldn't sit like that, so a low basket-chair and a cushion was fetched from the summer-house for her ; she complained, too, that the garden was full of gnats, and one had already stung the back of her neck.

The children made such an onslaught on the cake that Hetty was afraid there would not be enough, and they bordered their saucers with whipped cream as well. The new cousin Julius sat next to Hetty, and Jason on her other side. Minnie thought the roses a charming idea—no one but Hetty ever managed to think of such things—but Janey, as she laid her bare arms on the table, screamed out that she had pricked herself, and that such an arrangement she had literally never seen before.

Eli, full of youthful memories, told tales of horsemanship, whilst Aunt Rika said how delighted she was to have Solomon here again, it had never been so nice out here before, and they must all come very often—at least every other Sunday.

"Don't refuse," Solomon exclaimed. Hetty had now grown quite silent and anxious, for she had a foreboding of what awaited her. Ferdinand thought she had altered ; her face always used to be no less beautiful than interesting, but now the scale had turned in favour of the latter quality.

Julius began to talk of his business prospects. Trade in raw hides was good now, and if they could



come to some settlement about the premises in Old Leipzig Street—it was only a difference of eighty thalers between them—then he hoped to move in on the 15th of August.

Jason sat very quiet, evidently thinking deeply about something. Janey, Minnie and Rika were engrossed in clothes and servants, and only waiting till they were alone to include their husbands as a third topic of conversation.

Jenny was already urging Hetty to come with them into the Castle Park, and Ferdinand exclaimed: "Now, Solomon, don't keep the game waiting"; when this effected nothing, he burst into song:

" Oh why does it not start, not start ?  
Oh why does it not start, not start ? "

When Ferdinand sang, he was irresistible, so Solomon got up, exclaiming: "I think we had better play a rubber," and so signified that this secondary meal was at an end.

Max, Jenny, Wolfgang and Julius rallied round Hetty's standard, to trust to her leadership, like the Burgundians' army round the Maid of Orleans. But Hetty had to see to this and that and give orders, so that nothing should be neglected in her absence, besides arranging for a card-table in the summer-house, a plentiful supply of beer, liqueurs and cigars, and that rolls should be handed round again in two hours' time—before she could march out of camp with her forces. She was quite pleased to take off the children, for she was oppressed by an unbearable feeling of unrest and an anxious fear that made her tingle as with a thousand pin-pricks.

The womenfolk went to the other side of the garden into a summer-house as soon as the maid had swept up the withered leaves and dried acacia blossoms lying on the rotting, wooden floor, as well as on chairs and benches, whilst Eli, Solomon, Ferdinand and Jason settled themselves under the broad roof

and the luxuriant pale-green sprays of the syringa-bushes.

Under the pale-green leaves, here and there pierced by yellow sunbeams, the air was beautifully cool, as cool as the leaves themselves were to the touch.

Ferdinand shuffled with his left hand, and with his right arranged the markers in proper order.

"Tell me, Solomon, what exactly is the young man?" Eli inquired.

"What young man?" Jason exclaimed.

"Well, he is a nephew of mine," said Solomon.

"I know that, of course, Solomon. I mean, what's his business?"

"He means to start in leather."

"Oh, does he? Leather—leather is quite a sound business," answered Eli, thinking of saddles and bridles.

"How do you like him, then?" Ferdinand asked, not without ulterior motives.

"Why do you ask me? He is nothing to me. The young man is a sly character, I tell you."

"Never," Solomon exclaimed incredulously.

"Well, you'll see."

"Now, Uncle," exclaimed Ferdinand, "play to my card."

"I've not often been mistaken about people."

"Now then—a card or a bit of wood," Ferdinand urged impatiently.

Eli looked through his hand this way and that, and at last threw down a card, which Jason took with a small trump.

"The little ones beat the big," he said, for Solomon was Eli's partner.

"Well," Eli murmured slowly, when he had lost. "How would it have been if I had played the queen of hearts instead of the eight of diamonds?"

"No funeral orations allowed," cried Ferdinand, as he marked the score.

"Here comes one, like Blücher before Rossbach," Solomon said as he declared trumps, and with a flourish threw down a high one.



But fortune changed because Jason cut cleverly.

"That rather put out our calculations," Ferdinand remarked. He himself had nothing to declare, and was decidedly annoyed.

"I haven't had a decent card all afternoon," he grumbled time after time.

"Yes, yes, Ferdinand," Solomon agreed, "all whist players make the same complaint this year.

Eli again threw away an absolutely safe trick, tempted by a rubbishy card from Ferdinand. "They're just birds of prey, birds of prey they are!"

Jason uncorked the stone pitcher of beer and skillfully filled the large shallow glasses; he was an expert at that.

"All of you listen—you too, Solomon. I wanted to talk to you about something."

"You'll have time for that afterwards, won't you?" exclaimed Ferdinand, shuffling the cards.

"No," Jason answered; "the matter is really of some importance."

"And do you think our game here isn't, too?" Ferdinand inquired in an injured tone, as he sorted out his trumps.

"I say, Solomon, do you know that Dr. Kossling, who was at your house that evening——"

"Oh, that man," Ferdinand remarked.

"He has a fancy for Hetty," continued Jason.

"Well—and——?" Solomon answered gravely.

"Well, to say the chief thing first, Hetty has a fancy for him too, more indeed than a mere fancy."

Solomon frowned as he pressed his cards against his chin.

"Well, I don't know what you're aiming at, Jason."

"I think, Solomon, it would be wrong to oppose such a mutual attraction."

Then Solomon flared up. "No, Jason; do you know, I think it wrong rather to encourage such a mutual attraction."

"That I cannot understand, Solomon; you are as anxious for Hetty's welfare as I am."

“For that very reason I cannot sanction anything like this.”

“Let me speak,” interposed Eli. “Do you really think, Jason, that Hetty likes him?”

“I know it, Uncle.”

“Well—and what is the young man, then?”

“In any case a very capable and good man.”

“A good man belongs to a good position,” said Ferdinand, who sat there without taking any part at all, but with an expression most plainly asking: “Now, how can you, how can you even discuss such a question?”

“Let me speak, Ferdinand; I ask what the young man is.”

“What do you suppose! Doctor of Philosophy.”

“So far good; he has, then, a title at least. But what else is he?”

“He writes for periodicals, you see, and makes some sort of a living like that.”

“Then he is nothing—I understand, Jason! But what has he got, then?”

“Nothing at all; what do you expect? He comes from Brunswick, from quite poor circumstances,” Jason answered hotly.

“Absurd,” Solomon exclaimed; and this word was always his strongest expression of displeasure.

“Just let me speak, Solomon,” Uncle Eli broke in with a sharpness quite unusual in him. “So he is nothing and has nothing. But, in your opinion, Jason, he is a man to be respected?”

“If I didn’t know that, I should certainly not be taking his part here.”

“Of course not,” said Eli. “When he came once to see me, I liked him, too, very much, a sterling, unassuming man, not one of your braggarts like Herr Jacoby.”

“Yes—but——”

“Just let me speak, Solomon. No doubt you are right, he is nothing and has nothing. But now, what does that matter, Solomon, for haven’t you certainly



got something and you are something as well? If I was in your place, I'd certainly give him Hetty. In our family we've all of us taken love into account. You don't want, do you, to force the lass into misery? You must think over that as well, Solomon; such a splendid girl, too, as our Hetty is."

"Well—and what about his being a Christian?" Ferdinand inquired as Solomon closed his lips tightly and did not answer, whether because he was too angry or was changing his opinion, no one knew. "Now, what about that?"

"Can he help that, Ferdinand? Such an excuse was all very well for last century but, nowadays, no one ought to trouble his head about such foolishness, that's my firm opinion," stormed Eli, as red as a turkey-cock, for the revolutionary ideas of his youth had become part and parcel of his very nature by now.

"Hear that now," scoffed Ferdinand; "won't you sometime work that out for *The Bee on the Mission-field*?"

"No, Eli is quite right," Jason struck in, although, to tell the truth, he was of quite another opinion in this matter.

"Listen, Jason," Solomon now said very gravely, and with the deliberation of a rich man and a merchant accustomed to negotiations about matters of importance, money and money's worth. "Listen, Eli, we won't get angry at all, but discuss the matter quite calmly. You needn't think, Jason, that your news surprised me."

"Ah—is that so?" said Ferdinand.

"For I knew it before. Only I never thought that you would act as special pleader."

"And really I don't understand that either," chimed in Ferdinand.

"The answer I am giving you now, Jason, I could have given you sooner. That the young man admires Hetty does him credit, but there the matter ends. That is the only argument I understand. I am too old-fashioned for all the others. Who is he, then—

this Dr. Kossling? If he only had anything at all to weigh down the scale. But he simply comes along : 'Give me your niece Hetty.' He is an author. Yes, but what does that mean? If only he had a settled calling ! But a man like that, who earns a few groschen to-day and nothing to-morrow, comes to me and I am too——"

"Dear Solomon," interrupted Jason, "no doubt you understand a great deal about a merchant's position, but nothing at all of an author's in these days ; that I can hear, very plainly, from your words. He cannot amass riches and treasures, that I grant, but an author with money behind him will always earn enough and always have a more than sufficient income."

"That is true," said Eli in confirmation. "But a merchant, Solomon, can throw away all his property and his wife's as well in two speculations."

"*He* should know that," Frederick remarked in the brusque way he always had, which effectually enraged Jason, although he kept his self-control and only answered : "Yes, because there are always bigger swindlers than he is. It is a great mistake to imagine one is the very biggest oneself."

Solomon, who was always diplomatic, got up. "Then we had better end our discussion."

"No," Jason answered, remembering Kossling. "Let me say something more. It is just authors who run the smallest risks ; their business entails no outlay and needs no capital. All they work with is health, brains and nerve-power ; and in his business there are no lengths of silk that have afterwards to be sold as job lots at half their price."

"That is so, Solomon. Jason is quite right," Eli exclaimed.

"Every groschen he earns is pure profit, whilst the merchant may not have the very smallest gain even when he sells goods for ten thousand thalers."

"Yes," answered Solomon, who had sat down again, "but also possibly out of the ten thousand thalers



the merchant may make four thousand—and the author will never earn more than the honest penny.”

“True, true,” exclaimed Ferdinand.

“Now, Solomon, I tell you, you really needn’t talk like that. A man, like you, who can’t keep count how much he really has!”

“No,” said Solomon. “And I shouldn’t if I thought all else suitable.”

“Now, Eli, play,” Ferdinand urged. “Do let’s come to an end of this discussion.”

“But who is this Dr. Kossling? Someone come from who knows where. I don’t want to say any ill of him. But just ask in Berlin who we are—yes, just ask—I don’t know what you think of that.”

“Well, Solomon, I think it is enough to know what Kossling is in himself. We got our position as an heirloom to start with, and he has had to rely on his own powers for what he is or may become. That is something better.”

“That is true, Solomon,” Eli remarked, lifting his glass with both hands clasped round the shallow bowl.

“No—that is not so—family is more than you think. The brass-founder’s bare-footed youngster will always pop out again—and even if he should be a professor or privy councillor later on.”

Jason was somewhat taken aback, although he answered: “But not with Kossling!”

“And although I may privately have the same ideas about religion as Eli, still Hetty shall never, with our consent, marry a Christian. With our consent never,—you understand.”

“I can’t understand, Solomon, how you can get excited about what is so self-evident. I play hearts,” said Ferdinand.

“Well then, perhaps you mean to marry her to such a rotten Posen beggar,” Eli exclaimed, setting down his glass with an emphasis that shook the table.

But Solomon did not pick up the gauntlet.

“Of course I don’t need to explain to you, Jason.”

It is no question of a few customs or of being buried at last in Chaussee Street rather than in Hamburg Street, it is not that, but you know just as well as I do why we cling to the Jewish faith and refuse to let it die out in our family.

"I tell you, Jason, I would rather never see my Jenny marry than that she should take a Christian. How you can advocate such a thing passes my understanding. Do you think, either, that our poor Maurice would have wished it?"

"No," answered Jason, "but I think he would have wished everything done to make his only child happy—and in that way we can do more honour to his memory than by false sentiment and narrow-mindedness."

"Just what I wanted to say. I knew him when he was a little chap, and I can still remember how he always came to me, when he wanted money," Eli remarked with a nod of approval.

"Yes," Solomon began once more, "and I really don't see why the earnings of a lifetime should be squandered on an upstart like this."

"Don't think, Solomon, that the sixty or seventy thousand thalers you may give with Hetty——"

"It might be a hundred, mightn't it, Solomon?" Eli interrupted, fiercely turning over the cigars.

"—will be a present from you to him. Please don't imagine that, Solomon. The man doesn't want your money, and has never missed it so far. He only wants Hetty, and if only Hetty had not been brought up in your house in the midst of abundance, and where money was of no account, and if I thought that she could accommodate herself to very uncertain and poor circumstances without physical or mental suffering, I would, yes, I would myself, advise her to go away from here."

Jason and Solomon had both sprung to their feet, and stood looking each other full in the face, their cheeks flaming with rage.

"Heavens, how short the corks are in Charlotten-



burg," Ferdinand remarked in some embarrassment, as he toyed with the cork of a stone beer-bottle.

In a moment, however, the wave of passionate indignation that had rushed over the two brothers, making their eyes flash and their hands tremble, had ebbed away again.

"You needn't be afraid, Solomon," Jason said in a low tone, almost as though apologising. "I shan't do it—only I think some day you too will change your opinion."

"I do not think so, Jason."

"Not even if you turn your thoughts entirely away from Dr. Kossling and only think of Hetty?"

"Dear Jason," Solomon replied, not without a note of tenderness in his voice. "Rest assured that I think only of her all the time. I have already thoroughly discussed the matter from every point of view with my wife."

"Always the womenfolk! He must needs talk with the womenfolk," Eli fumed, striking the table with the palm of his hand.

"And I should consider it inexcusable on my part to sanction it, nor do I believe Hetty is in earnest."

Jason shrugged his shoulders. "Very well! but don't say afterwards that I did not warn you beforehand."

"And even if she was, that would not persuade me to consent to something which I am convinced is bad for her. Our Hetty is far too sensible not to get over it."

Solomon was now once more the deliberate, wealthy man and the merchant discussing matters with manufacturers and showing them why he ought to get foulards a groschen a yard cheaper.

"Far too sensible, Hetty is! I know her better than anyone, as I have lived twenty years with her. But we will make every effort—don't you agree?—to find her very soon a capable, suitable husband, and then you will see, Jason, that Hetty will not think any more of Dr. Kossling."

"Tell me, Solomon, may Dr. Kossling speak to you himself?" Jason asked very formally.

"Why should the man trouble to come?"

"Then that is your last word!"

"Jason, I might, of course, say: 'Come to me again.' But that is not my way. If a traveller calls on me, I either buy something or I do not buy, but I do not let him come again . . . that is one of my business principles."

Once more Jason had risen with that painful twist of the spine. His face was now so pale that Solomon was shocked.

"Then good-bye."

"Now what does that mean, Jason? Are we not to play out our hands," Ferdinand exclaimed indignantly.

"Now you see, Solomon—that's what you get—he is going," Eli remarked.

"But Jason," Solomon resumed, "surely the matter is not so important as all that."

"I find it serious enough, Solomon."

"Now, just sit down again," Ferdinand begged him.

"I really don't understand Solomon either," Eli interposed, "when Kossling is such a sensible fellow, of whom we know nothing but good; and a handsome man, too, he is. They were at my house lately, and how they stood there, really like princes!"

"No, Jason, perhaps you think I am hard-hearted and inconsiderate, and yet my thoughts are only running farther on than yours. You will see I am right, later on."

"We shall not agree, Solomon. Good-bye!"

"Well, Jason, I am sorry that you will go now, but I should be doubly sorry if I have hurt you personally. I did not mean to do so."

"But he won't bear you any grudge; brothers don't do such things," Ferdinand consoled him.

"No"—Jason spoke in a low, weary voice. "You have not offended me, but we each speak our own



language, and we shall never understand each other, just as we have never really understood one another in the past. But who knows, perhaps if I were the rich silk-merchant, Solomon Geybert, I should think and do the same. But please, do not keep me any longer."

"Won't you say good-bye to Rika?" Solomon called after him.

But Jason Geybert limped as fast as his lame foot would carry him down the shady path towards the house; for he was afraid that, if he delayed any longer, he would run into Hetty, who must be coming back soon—and he had a horror of that.

"A pity," said Ferdinand thoughtfully. "Well, we'll just play with dummy."

But the game had lost all its charm for the other two.

Solomon puffed at his cigar, bit it, threw down the wrong card continually, revoked and then played something still worse. Eli played even a shade less sensibly, and talked much more than usual after every trick, so that at last Ferdinand threw his cards down in a fury, exclaiming that never—and he had played whist for nearly forty years now—never had he seen such play; he had no desire to play with cadets and such-like military orphans. So saying, he angrily pocketed his gains and put up his feet on the chair which Jason had considerately vacated. The summer-house had grown close and hot, and the beer had only made the players feel the heat more unbearable, so they soon sat at their ease, in basket-chairs in the pale-green twilight—for the sun, instead of shining through the green leaves as at first, had now risen to the very tops of the trees—smoking in thoughtful silence, not especially happy, any one of them.

"But, Eli, did you hear how eloquent my brother Solomon was?—a veritable Mirabeau," Ferdinand said at last, referring to what had just happened; "you can see at once the Ofen student in him."

Before Eli could answer, however, there suddenly

appeared in front of the summer-house, like the three Fates, Rika, Janey and Minnie, all arm-in-arm, the two sisters plump and brightly dressed to right and left, and in the middle Aunt Minnie, very small and pinched in her black silk gown.

"Well," asked Janey, how's the game getting on? Too hot, I suppose?"

"Yes," Solomon peevishly replied.

"What's wrong then?" Rika asked, looking round and sniffing right and left with a shake of her head. There's such a smell of burning here? And where is Jason then?"

"Jason had an engagement for the afternoon," Ferdinand answered quickly. "He left his love for you. But he didn't wish to disturb the party?"

"Is that it," said Rika, trying to catch her husband's eye."

"Jason of course, just like Jason!" Janey exclaimed.

"Well, you know, his intentions were really very good," said Solomon.

"What! What!" Minnie's voice was very high in her desire to hear more.

But then came the sound of Jenny's and Wolfgang's voices, and Hetty appeared walking down the path, with Max at her side and Julius just behind.

"Why can you never be quiet, Minnie—why do you never learn that?" stormed Eli, so that poor Minnie did not know whether she was on her head or her heels. A fine thing, indeed, if she mightn't even ask a question!

"But have you seen our pears behind the garden?" Rika whispered; and taking poor disconcerted Minnie by the arm, she took her off, so that she might not meet Hetty just at that moment.

Hetty was carrying a bunch of red roses, and another that Jenny had put in her hair hung by her temples; Max and the new cousin Julius had red roses, too, in their buttonholes, but Jenny was adorned with a dainty little wreath of carnations on her loose, black



plaits, and it is not improbable that she had some idea how well it suited her. Wolfgang, too, had summer adornments in the form of a fine bandolier across his chest of green lime-leaves, that Hetty had cleverly made into a broad chain with the help of pine-needles and thorns ; but this green decoration only made the small face above the broad white turn-down collar look still paler and more sickly.

Hetty, with her tall, proud beauty in the white taffeta gown embroidered with golden ears of corn—she was wearing that now—looked like a queen amongst her retinue—for she was a good head taller than even the new cousin Julius.

“Now just look at her coming there!” said Eli, getting up from his chair.

“Oh, Hetty, who gave you the splendid roses then?” Janey called out to her.

“They’re from our Julius,” Jenny answered with a saucy giggle and a nudge for Wolfgang.

“Well then! Isn’t he really, delightful, Hetty? A perfect gentleman ; just like my dead brother Nero,” Janey remarked.

Julius Jacoby smiled, well satisfied.

“The few roses,” he said, “were surely the least I could do for Fräulein Hetty. But they are dear here—a terrible price. . . .”

Hetty at once saw that something had happened in their absence ; saw it in Ferdinand’s unnatural calm, in Solomon’s frown of annoyance, and in old Uncle Eli’s kindly, sympathetic glances.

“Well,” she inquired, “why have you stopped your game? Can I have anything brought to you?”

“Dear, no,” Eli answered ; “you have already provided us with everything ; but still, if you chanced to have any coffee-cakes in the house?”

“I’ll fetch them ; I think there are some,” Hetty assured him. “But where is Jason?”

“Oh, Jason! You know Jason, don’t you? Do you think—he will keep them waiting?” Ferdinand replied.

"Where does she work, I wonder?" Eli gaily inquired.

"Jason has gone already?" Hetty's voice trembled and she swallowed to keep back her sobs.

"Yes," said Solomon in a calm unperturbed voice; "he must have had some engagement or other."

"He told me as soon as he got here that he would not stay to supper," Janey remarked. "Didn't he speak to you about it?"

"No," Hetty answered. Her face had turned absolutely white, in striking contrast to the flaming red rose in her hair. "No—I—hoped—he—would stop—here." With this Hetty turned and—heedless of the others' cries—ran rather than walked quickly down the path to the house.

"You must just look after Hetty," Ferdinand said to Rika, who now came in with Minnie from their visit to the wonderful rooms. "I think she has gone into the house."

"Now, do you see, Solomon—that's what you get," Eli put in.

"Herr Jacoby, do you play whist?" Ferdinand exclaimed, trying to bring a little touch of festivity into the gathering. "Well then, let's be quick and have a game."

"As a matter of fact, I don't play, on principle," Julius said, taking the chair Jason had left empty for him. "A merchant——" But second thoughts prevailed, and the cards flew on to the table, dealt out by Ferdinand's practised hand with the speed of a whirlwind. Clap, clap, three at a time, with never a mistake on Ferdinand's part. And in the first game—Julius won trick after trick, having soon discovered that Eli's knowledge of the game did not amount to much—the maid came to bring coffee-cakes for old Herr Geybert.

"Do you see, Solomon, if that isn't Hetty all over—her head full of other things, and spite of it all still recollects my rubbishy coffee-cakes!"



"Don't interrupt the game," Ferdinand cried emphatically.

"What is Fräulein Hetty doing, then?" Solomon inquired of the maid.

"She went straight to her own room, Herr Geybert."

But Julius busily and calmly went on sorting his cards. "On principle" he avoided noticing what he did not wish to see.

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And whilst the new cousin Julius, with his sharp, darting little eyes—as a worthy successor of Jason—skilfully fleeced at whist old Uncle Eli, who was to-day more than usually inattentive to his game, his predecessor sat, absorbed in his own thoughts, in the conveyance that, drawn by two strong horses, was rolling heavily through the dust, noise and traffic, along the Charlottenburg high road to its low grey goal in the distance amongst the rows of trees at the end—the Brandenburg Gate. A hot sky glared above the trees, and the leaves all hung limp and motionless. Holiday-makers were enjoying themselves on the grass that bordered the road, and playing at a military camp in Silesia.

But Jason, who would have been enraptured by it at any other time, never saw the gay crowd to-day, as he kept his eyes fixed straight in front, and continually mopped the perspiration from his brow with a red silk handkerchief.

Jason's first idea, as he rushed off, was to go to Kossling and let him know how bad and completely hopeless it all was for him. But no sooner was he driving down than other thoughts began to come. Why should he spoil the poor fellow's Sunday? The next day would be plenty soon enough. Moreover, he felt how brutal it was of him to dash him out of his seventh heaven into the midst of cruel reality. But then, as Jason said to himself, perhaps that wasn't at all the case after all, that all happiness consisted entirely of thoughts and moods, and not in

present or future possessions ; that Kossling, in his very reverence and love for Hetty had something indestructible—a permanent good. The beauty of his visions, the sweetness of his memories, and the joyousness of his dreams remained untouched, whatever outward things might come to nought. Then, too, he was so made that he would never believe in nor grasp a refusal.

As Jason then hastily ran through the previous conversation in all its turns and phases, it seemed, even to him, as if the refusal had not been quite so decided, and he clung to a few words of his brother's, saying there might have been a possibility if this or that had been different. Jason pretended this, pondered that, and recalled one or other point in their talk, until the driver asked if Herr Geybert was meaning to drive back again. As Jason looked up all the others who had been sitting round him had got out, and he was all alone in the empty coach by the Brandenburg Gate, and the driver was roaring: "Just starting, starting ; only waiting for one more wretched person," roaring at the top of his voice to the Sunday walkers, who, however, preferred their own feet.

And Jason, in some confusion of mind, climbed down and went through the gate past the sentry-boxes into the city, walking as fast as he possibly could to get to Kossling quickly. For that would be—so it seemed to him once more—the best thing to do.

But the afternoon brought no lessening of the heat in its train. The leaves—in the open country, green under the cloudless sky—hung here in dusty clusters dead and motionless on the trees, and everything seemed to meet Jason in a noisy confusion of men and traffic. The broad road, as far as one could see, was crowded with people, elbowing and jostling each other in great companies or in groups of twos and threes, but all alike loud and unrestrained. Soldiers and shop people, workmen and mechanics were walking about with their laughing sweethearts by the gate in long, leisurely rows.



Soon Jason Geybert, too, slackened his speed—because it was hot—and began to scan the passers-by. And since women on Sundays in their gay best clothes have a trick of looking more attractive than on grey, working days, Jason Geybert's thoughts were soon busied with quite other things, and he, too, was strolling quite comfortably and aimlessly under the limes, so that when he reached the corner by Kranzler's, Charlottenburg and all that had happened there lay well-nigh miles behind him, and once more he was firmly resolved not to go to Kossling.

It would be wrong to blame him for this, for, after all, our nature is such that we never remain long in one persistent mood, and always try to push away what saddens and oppresses, to turn our eyes to what seems to promise gaiety of heart.

But since every corner outside Kranzler's was occupied, and there was no attraction in sitting indoors on such a day, and since, moreover, Jason really felt no desire to be alone, but rather an undefined sense of longing to find some sympathetic, virtuous soul, he walked on in the best of spirits, as eager for adventure and as sure of conquest as any Viking of old. He did not exactly know how to spend the evening and night, nor where his fortune might lead him; more than once he was strongly tempted to turn and swim with the stream, no matter where—perhaps to Moabite or to the fireworks at The Tents. But in the pleasant mood of idle loitering that had come upon him such a resolve would have entailed too much effort; besides, this was one of Jason Geybert's fair days—not a brown or black day, but one of his fair days—and on these he always gave himself up entirely to chance wherever it might lead him, without a thought of resistance.

It was not so on his brown or black days, for then Jason Geybert was always with his own strong hand the master of his fate.

So now for some time chance drove Jason Geybert in the wake of a golden star—golden as ripe ears of

corn. And already quick, gracious glances had fallen to his lot ; glances that kept him constant as a satellite of that bright star, and drew him ever closer and closer. This star took its path in strange zigzags and curves over the Castle Bridge, from corner to corner of the crowded Castle Square, and, leaving the arcade on the right, turned at last sharp to the left under the lea of the Elector's mighty monument, to wander along the silent City Street—in such a leisurely tempo, too, that here, in the quiet of Sunday afternoon, Jason could easily have merged his path and the star's in one.

But so strange is Chance. [Did it act as we expect, it would belie its name.] So strangely does it act that, just as he was in the act of taking a short turn to the left, Jason Geybert came face to face with someone of whom he had not thought for fully a quarter of an hour, whom he had pushed right to the back of his mind, but who now pushed forward all at once and forced himself upon his memory.

“Oh, Herr Geybert, I have been looking everywhere,” Kossling said, with an embarrassed flush, whilst the tone of his voice betrayed days and nights of excitement.

“Yes,” Jason slowly replied, indignant that the other did not understand the gravity and importance of the present situation. “What are you going to do this evening?” Jason spoke without deigning to look at Kossling, but kept his eyes, as if under some spell, fixed on his beautiful golden star, who was now steering a slow, slanting course across the road, and twice more flashed her light in his direction before she hid it behind a heavily closing front door.

Meantime, Kossling stood in front of Jason, silent but trembling with excitement, for he guessed only too well the meaning of Jason's changed attitude.

“There,” Jason said in a relieved tone to Kossling, at the same time indelibly impressing that house-door on his memory. “There—now it's your turn, dear friend. What shall we do now?” And he



passed his arm through Kossling's. "I have no plans—nowadays I have no peace for reading or writing."

"But why not, dear Doctor?" Jason was now determined not to tell him anything.

"Have you spoken to your brother now on my behalf?" Kossling hesitated as he put the question, but he felt impelled to ask without any beating about the bush.

Jason freed his arm with a slight jerk and stopped in amazement.

"But what do you expect, dear Doctor? How can I attack the man the minute he is back? That would be a very unwise proceeding."

And Jason was astonished at the calm way in which he made this statement.

"I thought you would drive out to-day," Kossling replied in disappointed accents. "And therefore——"

"No," said Jason, "that wouldn't do just yet, and then I think my sister-in-law Rika has a bad headache. I have been listening this afternoon to a little music in The Tents, and am now on my way home."

"Herr Geybert, when do you think that——?" Kossling resumed his attack.

"Well, certainly this week." And Jason took his arm again. He had regained all his usual self-confidence, and continued: "But now you will come with me to-day; you owe me a visit in any case."

Kossling demurred at first, but he was really glad to be asked, for after the last few excited days he had a longing for company and absorbing conversation, and after all his gloomy forebodings, his hopes, plans and visions, a desire for the relief of a man's words that went beyond the individual and tangible to dwell on general coherence and on impersonal, vital questions.

When Kossling had agreed they walked on for

a little in silence, side by side, their long shadows cast by the crimson sun behind them moving slowly along the pavement before them.

Jason began to speak then of the exhibition in the Academy. He could see nothing in Professor Lessing ; Kruger, generally in the front rank, made rather a tame impression with his show of pleasure-gardens, but Steinruck's elves had in his eyes a touch of soft and delicate poetry like a song of Schubert's. But what had most attracted him was a court scene—rather like a painting of Ostade's, and yet of quite a different colour scheme—and then the drawing of a wrought-iron intricate grating and the way in which the painter got his effect by careless little dabs of his brush had greatly interested him. He had looked upon the artist hitherto as only excelling in his drawing, but he was original and remarkable as a painter too, not certainly to be ignored. He was of short stature, with a great head like a gnome ; someone had pointed him out in the street. His name was Menzel, and he was a friend of Arnold's, the dealer in wall-hangings, although he—Jason Geybert—had never yet met him there. Not that he was sorry, for, as a rule, such people were so taken up with themselves and their own inner life that they were exceedingly wearisome and uninteresting in public, even if they were not utterly incapable of saying a sensible word, like the renowned Thorwaldsen—so he had been told.

Kossling made but a poor show in this conversation, for his thoughts were all elsewhere, and in any case he had not much feeling for painting, looking upon it simply from a literary point of view as an expression of thoughts and sensations, whilst Jason, who dabbled in it a little in private just for his own amusement, had a much keener appreciation and feeling for it. Jason, too, inherited from his father a delight in rare and beautiful colours and in fineness of detail, and the consequent craving for its satisfaction often made him spend more on sketches, silver,



china, or on finely printed almanacks and first editions, than the keeper of his privy purse would ever have been able to justify.

Kossling tried to bring back the conversation to Hetty, but Jason Geybert so continually frustrated his attempts that Kossling began to feel as though he was trying to grasp a wall of mist.

Yet he felt quite distinctly that Jason was hiding something, and only trying to put him off with his talk, for Jason Geybert was now very loquacious, passing from one subject to another, fluttering here, there, everywhere, like a will-o'-the-wisp, so that Kossling's suppressed excitement increased with every moment until he went in constant fear that it would find some sudden outlet.

Kossling, as they turned into Kloster Street, was therefore just on the point of breaking his promise to come with Jason Geybert on some pretext or other, when Jason stopped before a fine old house and drew him into the broad porch with its brightly painted walls and general air of welcome.

"There, here we are, dear Doctor! I will lead the way." So saying, Jason unlocked the high wooden door with its rich, deep, openwork carving, separating the wide and spacious porch from the entrance hall, with a great curved key which he had taken down from above the archway. "Then I don't need to ring," he explained. Kossling, who had not expected such a house with fine wood openwork doors, balustrades and quaint pillars bordering the steps, was charmed, and told Jason that it reminded him of Brunswick and the old houses built near the market.

"Yes," said Jason, as without the least effort they mounted the broad low steps interspersed every now and then by a wide landing. "I grew up here; here my father lived. But then the house was sold, and I practically never came here again. When eight years ago, however, one of the upper flats fell vacant, I took it, and now I often feel as though I had never

been anywhere else. See, this is my flat. Wait—there is no light in the passage.”

With this Jason Geybert opened the door, and an old housekeeper in a wonderful flowered gown flew past them like a little owl and disappeared into a back room.

Jason took Kossling at first to the front. “Please excuse,” he said; “this is really my bedroom, but Fräulein Hortel must just see that everything is in order in the other room.”

Kossling did not know where to look when on every side there was such evidence of taste and refinement. The windows were very broad and deep, so that a full measure of light penetrated even into the farthest corners of the light-green room. The bed was concealed behind a green curtain, and in addition there was only very little furniture, but all very dainty and valuable. The round mahogany table with ivory inlays on its shining, mirror-like surface was encircled by low easy chairs with thin green cushions, and a great richly carved mahogany arm-chair with massive bronze rosettes stood cornerwise in front of it. Its cover and cushions, too, were of the same thin figured damask. But the walls were completely draped with bright pale-green silk, whilst from the cornice there hung on dark-green silken cords to the level of one's eye—all in the same narrow little frames with dark wood corners—old, coloured engravings of Parisian fashions, gay beauties in farthingales, ladies in Nature's garb, and caricatures of dandies in the time of the First Consul. Yet between all these unrefined things one came across the dreamy faces of a few of Gavarni's childlike Griseldas, and one or two sweet and wonderfully dainty women's heads known to Kossling in the Charivari illustrations.

But what most astonished Kossling were the two exactly similar mahogany cabinets with bronze capitals on the corner uprights, against the farther wall, one to the right, the other to the left, both entirely filled with old china, groups, figures, dishes, white



and coloured, arranged in tasteful alternation. So intent had he been on these, that the great red-brown cupboard to which Jason now went had entirely escaped his notice.

Kossling remembered the old worn-out furniture in his room, old stuff that even lacked the virtue of being his own, and once again had the unpleasant sensation of having intruded ; so strong, indeed, was his feeling, that he would have liked to go at once and never set eyes again either on Jason or anything else that bore the name of Geybert.

Jason noticed Kossling's discomfort. " I can't help the green silk," he said, with a laugh ; " they are only a couple of badly dyed lengths that were to be put out of the warehouse stock, so I thought I would just have them hung up over the walls." With this explanation Jason took his camelot jacket out of the wardrobe and hung his green Sunday coat neatly on the peg, not without first looking at it with loving encouragement and affectionately stroking and patting it, whilst Kossling, with his back to him, was silently gazing at the pieces of china.

Kossling was, indeed, no judge of china, yet he felt that this had been acquired by a collector with good taste ; one little figure especially charmed him. With its curved eyebrows and its unusual smile it reminded Kossling of Hetty ; brought her picture irresistibly before his mind's eye. He would have loved to take the little image from the cupboard and kiss it as he thought of her, and stood there quite lost and absorbed in contemplation.

" Oh yes," Jason remarked, coming up behind him, " I often sit for hours before them too. I always think a poem could be written about every one of these pieces of china. Just look at this Frankental group—Apollo and Venus—and Vulcan is just about to throw his net round them. That is a sonnet. And look at that little Meissen figure"—Jason pointed to Kossling's little lady. " It is a genuine Kändler. Isn't it really a roguish Sicilian? And this here is

my pride, Doctor, this little maid in biscuit china, Sèvres, said to be by Houdon. Just notice the soft delicate lines of the young body, and how dead clay has become real human flesh and blood, just as in some folk-song. Yes, dear friend, these few pieces of china here are really my only joy. Do you know, before I buy a new piece—when I only play with the idea for days and weeks—every time I feel just as if I was at the beginning of a new courtship.”

But Kossling did not stir; he only felt more acutely that a gulf was fixed between them, however friendly Jason might be to him. Yes, Kossling glanced down at his clothes, and although he could not discover any spot or stain, he still seemed to himself but a country bumpkin in these surroundings. And, on the other hand, Jason here in his own four walls seemed a different man from Jason in the street or restaurant or at his brother's that evening. All the soft and undefined features of his character here grew firm and decided, and Kossling regretted the criticism he had given of him to Hetty. “You wonder, no doubt,” Jason went on, “why I did not take this room for my study, but the one at the back is quieter in the daytime, just as this is at night, and a single heavy cart that shakes the windows has always been enough to make me incapable of any achievement for two hours after.” So Jason chattered on as he strolled this way and that, explaining the prints and copper engravings to Kossling, and why his choice had fallen just on those and on no others. As a matter of fact he had now quite forgotten Kossling's fate again; all he saw in him now was the artistic friend to whom it was a pleasure to show his treasures.

But Kossling still felt drawn to the cabinet and the tiny figure whose dark little eyes seemed literally to wink at him wherever he went or stood.

“Might I just look at the one little figure more closely?” he begged.

“Must you really?” Jason asked anxiously.



"I'll be sure not to drop it," Kossling begged once more.

With some hesitation Jason opened the cabinet, grasped the figure securely with two firm fingers round its slender waist, lifted it quietly out from among the others, and carefully handed it to Kossling, who took the little lady in his hand, twisting and turning her this way and that, so that the candles shone and glistened first in one curve or side and then in another, and before Jason knew what was happening, Kossling had pressed a kiss on the cold, roguish little face.

"Whatever are you doing, Doctor?" Jason exclaimed.

Kossling was quite embarrassed, and stammered at last: "It reminded me of someone."

"Give it over here," demanded Jason, and shut up the little figure in the glass cupboard again as carefully as he had taken it out. "There—now it is gone."

But at the very moment when he uttered these words with a smile all the afternoon's experiences arose again before his mind's eye, robbing him of his calm and leaving him quite embarrassed. He was sorry for this poor man, for in spite of the fact that Jason in the whole course of his life had had too many passionate attachments ever to be under the spell of only one, still he could quite sympathize with what Kossling was now suffering.

"Shall we go to the other room?" Jason inquired, opening the door as if he thought that all this would stay here now with the little china lady in the cupboard.

In the passage old little Fräulein Hortel, in her flowered gown, slipped past them again without a sound, like some tiny owl.

The back room did, indeed, at the first moment arouse quite different sensations in Kossling. Door and windows were opened on to the broad roofed-in balcony running along outside with its carved wooden

trellis-work and its outlook over a cluster of old red and brown roofs, as well as over the tops of trees rising somewhere out of cramped courtyards and narrow little old gardens in their efforts to get to the light ; and in the distance the square tower steeple of the Nikolai Church rose against a background of sunset into the pale sky through a soft haze of dust and smoke. The room itself was flooded with ruddy light, and gave the impression of size and almost entire emptiness, for Fräulein Hortel had laid the supper outside on the balcony, and carried out all necessary tables and chairs as well.

“ Books, books, books,” Jason remarked as he pointed to the bookshelves which ran high and low, to right and left, and between the windows, barely leaving room for a few high-backed chairs against the walls, and some plates and engravings above them. Pretty little leather-bound volumes stood in neat rows beside books in more ordinary cardboard covers, and a parting ray of ruddy light ran over the gilt lettering on the green title labels and lingered in the tiny gold flowers which decorated the backs of the books.

Kossling was immediately absorbed in their titles ; that he could never have failed to be, whatever the state of his emotions. Each one had something to give him, a definite mental picture of the book's contents ; it seemed to Kossling like the name of a dish which he had never eaten, but whose taste he none the less thought he knew.

Jason, however, was reluctant to resign his office of guide.

“ This is my laboratory,” he said ; “ here I have learnt to be modest ; I have buried many a hope in this room, and I have found compensation for many a hope that has been shattered outside its walls. A real book-lover—mark that, dear Doctor—ought to have neither wife, child, nor kindred. These here must be his all. Do you know, dear friend, I always say : ‘ These are my brothers ’—he pointed to one bookshelf ; and ‘ These are my fathers ’ ; and lastly,



‘These’—pointing to a third—‘are our ancestors.’ They really are my favourites, for they were living in a time when, as Lichtenberg somewhere says, to be a writer at all meant to be a good writer. Are you interested in good editions? Just look at this Geneva edition of *Voltaire* in 1751, and this translation of *Montaigne* by Bode in the nineties, or here, the first London edition of *Diderot*. Do you know his *Les Bijoux Indiscrets*?” Kossling thought for a moment. “No,” laughed Jason, “nor do you need to. Yet there is this side of life as well, and it, too, is right.”

But Kossling scarcely heard him. There was no getting him away from the books, as he stretched his neck to see what was in the topmost rows, and knelt down to decipher the lowest.

Kossling recognized at once that, as with the china, this library had not been thrown together by chance, but owed its existence to the considered action and unusual taste of the collector. There were not many historical books, but much philosophy and many older prose writers. There were, too, at least fifty volumes dealing with India, and again whole rows of French tenth-century romances in their dainty little volumes with their copper-plate illustrations. Heinse, Hamann, Theodore Anadeus, Hoffmann, Jean Paul, Goethe were there, not only in their complete works, but also practically all in first editions as well. Kossling could not turn his eyes away, for he had seldom met with any collection which bore such high testimony to its owner’s good taste, and which severity and judgment combined had kept entirely free from every touch of mediocrity or inferiority.

“Now do come away from the books,” Jason said at last, after having somewhat irritably busied himself meanwhile at his writing-table where something had been disarranged. “I am sure you can’t see properly any longer.

“Do you know, I often wonder whether books are really good or bad for us. Very often they seem

to be like nothing but a poor copper engraving, a more or less obliterated copy of life, picturesque enough, but only acceptable when no other good impression is available ; then, at another time, books seem to intensify the meaning of life and to transform its madness into wisdom, as if life slowly shaped itself in accordance with books. But let us leave the books, Doctor. Come, I will show you some engravings. Here is the Chodowiecki work. Or would you rather look at butterflies, I wonder? In the cupboard I still have some cases ; in my young days I was an impassioned collector ; but, as often happens, that hobby has lost all its attraction. Besides, now, with my leg, it would be too much of a strain for me."

Yes, Kossling would like to see the butterflies.

So Jason opened, one after another, the glass-covered cases in which the butterflies were stuck by long pins on neat pieces of cork, each with its own clearly written little label. Many were a little pale and faded, but others as brilliant as though only that very morning they had flown across the meadows in an ecstasy of joy.

"It is curious," Jason remarked, "that although I have forgotten nearly all their names, yet almost every one of these butterflies holds some special memory for me. I still know exactly how I came by him, and to-day what I really see is not the gay little four-winged creature, but the long forest-path amidst the beech-trees' bright clustering leaves on either hand ; this one brings back one early day in spring when I tramped through the marshes and saw the little white birch-stems with their bare red boughs standing up amongst the yellow reeds ; or that one, again, is for me to-day only a rich meadow full of tall purple vetches."

Kossling bent down close to the case.

"Were you ever a collector yourself, Doctor?"

"No," Kossling replied, "but I like looking at butterflies very much."



"But please come now," urged Jason, as he stepped up to the supper-table, set outside on the balcony.

The sun was now so low that only a broad, fiery edge appeared through the violet veil of mist, and two sharply defined straight lines of purple crossed the horizon far away above the darkening roofs, only broken by the sharp dark triangle of the church steeple. High up on one roof a man stood, tall and dark, beckoning with a long dove to a flight of circling doves to come home, and the softly circling evening smoke rose straight as a dart from every chimney round.

"How beautiful it is here," Kossling said as he stood against the railing.

"Dear friend, you can see it just as well from the table."

"Perhaps," Kossling said, with a laugh, as he sat down opposite to Jason, who pushed the dishes of cold meat over to him and filled his glass.

But Kossling only sipped his wine and ate very little. He never could eat in warm weather, he said; Jason, however, affirmed that such outside things never affected him.

"It is a pity you never collected butterflies," Jason began again slowly, at the same time looking thoughtfully at his visitor. He really did not know what it was in this young man that so appealed to him. And yet he was attached to him; perhaps there was nothing soft or sensual about him, and every feature was expressive of a certain strong and pronounced independence of character—his somewhat thin cheeks, full brow, as well as the little ridge of freckles over his aquiline nose and the flashing clear blue-grey eyes that showed their comprehension of everything mentioned, and continually changed colour in response to an undercurrent of varying thoughts and feelings.

"Herr Geybert, when in my life do you suppose I should have a chance to collect butterflies?" Kossling inquired somewhat bitterly as his mind compared

Jason's opportunities for development with his own bondage.

"It is a pity," Jason answered, looking at him in amazement, "for it teaches many a lesson. It came to my mind this afternoon how, as a lad, I once had a caterpillar, a great fine, green caterpillar with blue and white stripes, a splendid, rare creature, and I was delighted to think what a pretty butterfly it would make. But one day my caterpillar grew limp, and in a moment shrank up like an empty leather tube. Do you know what had happened? The collectors say the creature had been pierced by one of those ichneumons that lay their eggs in the caterpillars. And as it grows the vermin inside grows too, without any outward sign, and apparently with no inconvenience to the caterpillar; but then, quite suddenly, it shrinks up, and the white maggots bore through the wrinkled skin and live on its carcass. And the memory of this green caterpillar was forced upon me this afternoon."

"This afternoon?" Kossling laid down his fork and looked anxiously at Jason.

"Yes, this afternoon, when I was out at my brother's in Charlottenburg."

"Then you were in Charlottenburg after all," Kossling exclaimed, leaping up from his chair.

"Yes," Jason quietly replied. "But sit down again, dear Doctor, if we are to discuss it calmly."

Kossling grasped the balcony railing with one hand as he fell back into the capacious chair.

"We Geyberts, I think," Jason thoughtfully continued, "we Geyberts are very like my green caterpillar, that was never to turn into a butterfly. I wonder how long it will be before the vermin have entirely mastered us."

"Have you spoken for me, as you promised?" Kossling asked; and in spite of the falling twilight Jason saw the deathly pallor of his face creeping up to the very roots of his hair, his eyes alone flashing with inner light.



But Jason forced himself to keep calm. "Of course I did," he said. "Had you not my word for it?" Then he stopped.

"And?" asked Jason, almost choking over that one short word.

Jason fingered his knife as he answered shortly with a shrug of his shoulders: "Then I just came away."

Kossling had got up and was now standing, grasping the railing with both hands in front of Jason, a tall dark figure against the brightness of the evening sky.

But Jason could see how even his back was shaken by sobs, and he, too, lost all his equanimity.

All that Kossling felt was a dull pain above his eyes, just such a pain as he had felt as a boy in a scuffle with the poor-school boys when he had been struck by a leaden ball. For the moment he could remember nothing; had no idea of the import of Jason's words and of the loss they meant to him—all he felt was this pain in his head, the choking in his throat, and the tears running down his cheeks.

"Yes," Jason resumed after a long pause, "really, dear friend, I did not get any very favourable reply. But when I consider the matter, perhaps it is not quite so bad as it may appear to you now. Indeed, it may perhaps all be for the best for you. Men like you ought to be alone; your roots are fixed in solitude and unsatisfied longing. You are making a mistake, Doctor; men of your stamp are not meant to marry."

How all this bored Kossling! As if he had ever even thought of marriage; as if, indeed, he had ever clothed one of these overmastering feelings of his in thought! How indifferent he was to all Jason's words! He scarcely even heard them.

"A sporting dog must never eat his fill or put on flesh if he is not to lose all his power of scent. And you, Kossling, are one of the sporting dogs that have to chase the game which no one else can catch."

Kossling listened for a moment as this comparison

caught his attention. But, after all, what was it to do with him?

Jason felt Kossling's mood, although he neither turned nor answered.

"Now you are thinking this is just empty talk; what does he know of my feelings? Dear Doctor, believe this one fact: the world has never yet understood a lover—and in times to come you will scarcely understand yourself."

Kossling tried to reply, but stopped short. After all, what else could he say now?

"Dear Doctor, I know what you mean. How often have I tried to run my head through a brick wall and almost cracked it in the process, always only to find afterwards that the world had been right."

Jason stopped as though expecting an answer, but when none whatever came he began again:

"When I was driving back this afternoon it struck me it was really of no importance to you whether your answer was 'yes' or 'no'."

Kossling turned sharply, as if he did not understand Jason.

"Yes, for as I said to myself, a 'no' can only affect your outer life and must leave the inner untouched."

"How?" Kossling spoke slowly, as if talking in his sleep.

"I thought it could in no way diminish your reverence nor touch your dreams and memories, and as I told myself, the best part of life—of our life at least—consists of memories and dreams. And I really believe that the affair is good as it is, for all that would only throw responsibilities upon you which your shoulders are not strong enough to bear."

Kossling listened thoughtfully; at the moment it all sounded so gentle, persuasive, consoling, and prompted by mental cowardice he yielded to it, in spite of a thousand contradictory impulses.

"Yes," Jason continued, "you must not think that I calmly submitted to an unfavourable decision. I



fought for you every step of the way. You have, too, another advocate in our family who took up your cause very warmly."

And Jason began to tell about the afternoon ; gave all the stages of the conversation over the game of whist in the summer-house ; how once or twice he thought he had almost persuaded his brother Solomon, who, however, always managed to find fresh counter-arguments and to draw his head out of the nooze once again.

Meanwhile Kossling, opposite Jason, both hands grasping the top of the rail behind him, kept his head so deeply bowed that his face could not be seen. Night—sad and oppressive—began to fall over the houses, and hid the distance behind her black veil. Beside Kossling's dark form, a few stars no larger than pin-points peeped through the sky with a modest, shy twinkle in the warm sultry night. Not a breath of air was stirring above the city, where smoke and mist hung so low that it seemed almost as if human hands could stretch up to the very clouds, did they but try hard enough.

Jason warmed to his subject more and more, twisting and turning everything this way and that, until he convinced himself and Kossling, eagerly listening, got the impression that after all it was not yet quite hopeless—indeed, he almost gave a sigh of relief that everything had really turned out very well.

Jason especially emphasized the one point that his brother's great objection had been that Kossling had no profession, occupied no position, and therefore had no settled income upon which to depend ; and also that, if this was once secured, everything might take on a different complexion, and that he was absolutely certain that then they would have a basis for further consideration.

And he himself was now quite gay and confident. Perhaps the last word in this business had not yet been said, and if Kossling should come with definite success and able to say : " Now look, this is what

I am, and this I shall be," then he would no doubt get a different answer. Even though his brother might pretend to have an eye for nothing but money and income, he would yet set just as high a value on a title and position. The fact was that no one in his circle could understand how anyone could have a doctor's degree without making some material profit out of it, and this was a prejudice it was useless to try to combat.

He—Jason—had indeed never thought from the first that anything could be achieved at the present moment; it was possible, however, that there might be some hope for the future.

"And Hetty?" Kossling asked abruptly; his thoughts, no doubt, were not following Jason's words.

Jason started. He did not care to hear this intimate family name on another's lips. "My niece," he said with emphasis. "I have not talked to my niece nor do I wish to. Do you understand me, I wonder? I can uphold you in public; even plead your cause in public. . . . I have done both. But privately I neither can nor will do anything. We will, if you please, leave my niece out of the discussion altogether."

But no sooner had he spoken than Jason regretted his words, and continued in a kindly tone: "Don't misunderstand me, Doctor. I should not like any hopes to be aroused in my niece which, later on, could not be fulfilled. If there should happen to be anything hard or difficult to bear, then this burden must be borne by you alone. There will be time enough when you come back again. It should be enough for you to know that your affection is reciprocated. But if you do not achieve what you desire—and this is a contingency which we must consider—or again meet with a refusal, then every word said now would not only be a mistake and superfluous, but it would be criminal as well."

Kossling did not see the force of this statement, nor was he in the mood to follow any tortuous paths of Jason's mental processes.



"Nothing rash must be done. You have, of course, time before you, but the first thing to do is to appear as if you accepted your rejection as fixed and final; that will be your wisest course."

"And your niece Hetty?" said Kossling.

"My niece!" Jason corrected. "I think if she cares for you she will wait without my speaking to her, and without your breaking the promise you have given me. But if not—then you are not meant for each other."

Kossling shook his head.

"But don't you understand me, Doctor? You surely cannot ask it of her until you know for certain the course that events will take. Or else the matter is like the game we always used to play as children; one of us had to go into another room and we told him that when we called he would come through the wall—really through the wall, not through the door. And he used to sit there in the room, and sit, and sit; but he never came through the wall. Doctor, do you know why? Because we never called. Children can play such a game just because they are children, but, dear friend, not we who have put away childish things."

"No, no," agreed Kossling, who had barely heard what was said.

"I am glad, do you know, that you are sensible and can see reason. It is really best so, believe me, although I am sorry that I have to say these things to you. I like you, but as I have just told you, if there is anything here hard to bear, it must be entirely borne by you and you alone. You must not give my niece a single heartache that she does not already have. For every sad moment you cause her is, after all, your fault."

That Kossling understood, and the acute pain of self-reproach came as a secret, exhilarating relief from the heavy feeling of misery that paralysed every resolve.

Then Jason went on to talk of what was to be done and what Kossling's prospects might be.

He had three irons in the fire, two in Brunswick, but since he would rather not go back there, he had also now made an application to the library in Berlin, as assistant-librarian, to begin with ; it would be quite satisfactory if it materialized. He only had to work until three o'clock, when he was his own master and would no doubt find opportunities of every kind. He would like it too, as he was interested in any work amongst books. These enormous tides, always flooded again and again by a fresh deluge, these immense regions of which one mortal life could but embrace a corner, had always aroused a sense of awe and reverence in him.

"Yes," Jason answered, "but it must be an easy matter for you to find something at home."

And so they discussed this plan and that.

Kossling had only a short time since been at home and could not go back again at once, because he had lately been earning less. Jason wanted to help him out with a few gold coins, but Kossling was not willing to accept his help.

Jason, however, put before him that he was not really doing it for him, but on behalf of his niece, so that there was no need for Kossling to have any scruples about taking the money. Nor need he worry in the least about paying it back ; there was no hurry for that. He hoped Kossling would see that he really wished him well, although it might not have seemed so just now.

After a lengthy argument, Jason conquered Kossling's reluctance. Hetty, however—and this was the one stipulation—Hetty was to know nothing of all this ; he was not to see her nor tell her of his plans. This was the only thing Jason required—and with good reason—from Kossling. He—Jason—was obliged to insist on it because he did not want to play his brother false and because he would not be responsible for arousing hopes in Hetty that might never know fulfilment. If the two had really to be parted—a contingency that in view of Kossling's



uncertain future might be only too possible—then it had better be done now at once. It would be but the work of a moment later on to unite the broken threads, and then all the past would be forgotten. Jason said he could not understand why so many words were needed; it almost seemed to him that Kossling's affection was not so very deeply rooted, since he had to beg and entreat him to spare Hetty trouble and vexation.

Kossling could not shut his eyes to the logic of this stern conclusion, and he assured Jason again and again that he was not deceived in him and that he would do everything to shield Hetty—he still said Hetty—from every sad moment. Only it was so hard, so dreadfully hard for the moment, that he must ask for Jason's consideration.

And Jason very nearly told him what had been so long on the tip of his tongue, as more than once to terrify him lest it should escape—namely, that all his arguments, apparently so reasonable, were simple nonsense and that in Heaven's name he should settle the matter with Hetty alone. If she was willing, that was amply sufficient. And he would help him as much as he could and Eli would too, perhaps, if only the two of them had the necessary courage. All the time Jason had only been waiting for Kossling's opposition to go over to the enemy's camp with flying colours. But of this Kossling had no idea.

To avoid having to say this—for he was now tired of this long, skilful fencing bout and longed for wholesome, plain speaking—Jason went quickly into the room and rummaged about in some recess of his writing-table, so that Kossling, outside in the dark, could hear a clinking and rattling. Then Jason came back and said he expected that would be enough, and that, at any time, he could have as much again if he needed it.

Kossling was still standing with his back against the balcony railing and his head bent, a dark figure

against the sad, low, evening sky with its scattered stars of ruddy, twinkling light.

All this was so humiliating for him; the money that the other gave him and which he was compelled to take only made his bitter feeling of dependence more acute and intensified the deep gulf that separated him from all the Geyberts.

His dull pain of a little time back had vanished, leaving in its place a feeling of paralysis, of spiritless self-pity, that asked again and again what then had really happened and how Fate had really worked in his disfavour, until he passed his hands over his body and found that he was exactly the same as before.

But Jason felt that at any rate Kossling had gained time in which to get over it and that in two or three months everything might have a different aspect. Perhaps—who could tell?—it might all end well after all.

\* \* \* \* \*

At the very hour when Jason and Kossling were standing side by side on the balcony, in the warm grey night that weighed upon the city with its heavy veil of mist, standing looking silently into the darkness of the courtyards, only broken, here and there, by the ridge of some broad roof or a mysterious twinkle of light from some silent dwelling—each absorbed in his own thoughts as once before when they leant over the bridge—at this very hour, Hetty, with her head on her hand, was sitting, barely five miles away, at her open window in Charlottenburg, looking at the sky spread out here like a dark-blue silken tent above the dark tops of the lime-trees.

The silken tent was bestrewn and bespangled with hundreds of glistening sapphires—sapphires in rows of fiery dots, in lines, triangles, squares and strange diagrams, then again with sapphires that were laid on close together in thick groups as if a handful of bright grains had been thrown and stuck up there; and lastly, a portion of this tent was adorned with



single stars of special beauty and brilliance, finer than the others and standing independently aloof in the heavy, dark-blue silk. The sky was literally covered with stars just as on some autumn night.

The sultry heat of the day had gone, and Hetty, as she sat in her light clothing by the window, was almost cold in the sweet fresh air blowing from the limes. But it was remarkably quiet for a Sunday evening, and Hetty could plainly hear Wolfgang breathing as he lay sleeping on the sofa in the dark room behind hers.

Earlier in the evening Hetty had gone straight to her room and in utter dejection fallen on her bed like a stone. Burrowing into the pillows, she had lain there some long time, with wide-open eyes fixed on the white ceiling, her neck strained, and with closed, trembling fists. Then she had burst into sobs that shook her whole body. She did not really know why she cried; all she felt was an indescribable sadness, a bitter weariness. She never once thought that she would lose Kossling, for she had never really believed that he would be hers, since she felt that she would only be a drag upon him. But that it all should have been so short . . . of course it was better so for him, for what could she ever be to him? But for her, who would never get anything more from life. . . . And between the muttered sentences, between her dreams and complaints, between reassurances and ever-recurring questions as to why this should come upon her, just upon her, who all her life long had never done anyone an injury—between all these, her deep, tempestuous sobs for moments together put a stop to groans and thoughts alike.

At last, however, her tears only came like the few last heavy drops that fall from the trees when the force of the tempest is overpast and it only hangs on the far horizon as a grey sunlit wall, and her sobs only shook Hetty like the passing gust of wind that sweeps the moisture from the roofs. A sense of gentle grief came over her, of resignation to her

pain. Hetty neither thought nor repined ; she did not speculate as to what happened that afternoon—she only felt that all her hopes lay shattered. Only one phrase did she murmur to herself—ten, nay twenty times—that she really had always been kind and friendly to everyone, that she wished no one ill, had done no wrong to any, and that she had always been alone and had known neither father nor mother.

Then her aunt had come very quietly to the door, knocked quietly, and quietly begged Hetty to come in to supper, and afterwards some arrangements would have to be made for Wolfgang. Hetty had got up, feeling bruised in every limb, had smoothed out the creases in her gown and bathed her eyes so that no one should see she had been crying.

It was no very pleasant atmosphere in the parlour. Jenny was tired, and Ferdinand and Janey had been almost insulting each other a few minutes before. The new cousin Julius had attached himself to Solomon, and the two were discussing the solvency of various customers in Posen and Breslau. His loss at cards had made Eli irritable, and he was letting Minnie feel the brunt of his ill-humour. Rika was worrying the maids to be quick with their service so that the horses need not be kept standing so long, and Ferdinand went out himself to see if they were well covered up, although Eli remarked that he could not understand Ferdinand, for his sorry old East Prussian nags could not possibly get any stiffer.

The light hurt Hetty's eyes and every sound went through her head like a knife, but there she sat, tall, pale, upright, with only one overwhelming desire : to be once more alone.

Ferdinand was the first to get up, with the last bite still in his mouth, and chewing and smacking his lips, he assured his hostess that it had been quite delightful. But Eli was the most leisurely of all, and said to Hetty : " They'll not drive off without me, and if they did, I'd just stay the night out here. I



can assure you, my child, the air even in Stein Road is no better than this."

When they were all scolding outside, he got up at last and went out very slowly with Hetty, who alone had not deserted him. Since it was half-dark and Eli's eyes, as he said, no longer of the sharpest, he begged for Hetty's arm, and as they stepped out into the little veranda and could see by the flickering light of the newly lit carriage lamps how they were all bustling about here and there, whilst Ferdinand, patting the horses on neck and shoulder, tested the harness, and the new cousin Julius had already taken full possession of the back seat which Jason had occupied before—when they stepped out, Eli stood still for a moment with Hetty, as if he had to get his breath.

"One thing I tell you, dear Hetty," he said with slow emphasis, "no marrying into the family down there; do you understand? I just wanted to say that to you."

With these words he drew his arm out of Hetty's, and with his eighty-year-old legs gaily clattered down the wooden steps.

"Eli! Eli! what are you stopping for?" cried Ferdinand.

"Well, I suppose you can wait a bit," Eli peevishly replied.

The horses started off at once, whilst Wolfgang came running up to throw his arms round Hetty and rub his head against her as he told her how glad he was he could stop, and especially that he didn't have to go to school in the "Monastery" the next morning, but could get a long sleep.

Solomon and Rika looked after the departing guests for a time until other vehicles came in the way, when they came in again very slowly, arm-in-arm. To have visitors like that all day really was tiring, they said, so they would finish up at once and go to bed.

Could Wolfgang sleep for once on the sofa in Hetty's room, at any rate to-night? He was only

a boy, after all ! Or else his bed could always be put up in the dining-room. And off they went, arm-in-arm, as they had come up the steps, with a parting injunction to put out the lamps carefully, so that there might be no accident such as one continually heard and read about.

Now Hetty was alone with Wolfgang, who, overcome with sudden fatigue, blinked at her with dull, half-closed eyes.

“ Well, Wolfgang, we shall get on all right together.” And she took something from her own bed and something from the maid’s bed that was not being used and made up a resting-place for the lad on the hard, badly upholstered settee, so soft and comfortable that he stretched out his limbs in delight, as he told her he wasn’t half so well off at home, then turned his face to the wall and was asleep in a minute.

Then Hetty was again left by herself, and in the half-darkness she slipped off her dress and threw a light wrap round her shoulders. Sleep was out of the question, so she sat down quietly by the window and looked out into the night. There had been a little talking in the other bedroom, but that, too, had stopped and all she could hear was Wolfgang breathing at the other end of the dark, silent room.

Back flew all the thoughts she had had before ; not one was missing. Hetty told herself a hundred times that it was a good thing for Kossling ; he would soon get over it and climb up higher, but that, in spite of all, she would never love him less. And she bemoaned her fate, for this she had not deserved ; her eyes filled again, and as she dropped her head the tears fell in a cool stream on her hot, bare arms. And between tears and smothered sobs Hetty again repeated in an unintelligible whisper a word, a sentence, the same thing ten or twenty times. She called Kossling by name in her longing to say good-bye to him, just one last good-bye. She had always been lonely in life ; why was she here ? How unfair it was,



when she had always been kind to everyone and never done or wished ill to a single person !

She lifted her head up from her arms and with wide-open eyes looked into the flickering sapphires on the deep-blue silken background, wondering if there were any up there as hopeless and unhappy as she was ; then, when all the bright sparks faded away before her swimming eyes, she once more buried her head for quite a long time in the warm darkness of her bare, folded arms.

The quieter it grew, the less she heard people passing, or carriage wheels or the whispering trees, the sadder and more hopeless Hetty felt, the more oppressed by her loneliness and the more confused in her complaints and protests. What would she do then ? Who would miss her if she went away from here ? Her aunt would not have any less tasty dinner cooked on that account, and her uncle would only stay away from business for one morning at the most. Uncle Ferdinand would go to his game of whist next day, and in three days' time Uncle Jason would be sitting at the confectioner's again and trying to get hold of the latest Paris newspapers.

And Hetty, in her misery, persuaded herself more and more how unwanted she was, unwanted by every living creature. But if she had repeated at some calmer moment all that she now whispered into the cool silence of the starlit night, she would have seen the bitter injustice she did to all her family who, in their own way, were certainly very fond of her. But this was not one of Hetty's calm times. No, indeed, she trembled in every limb, at one moment tingling with fiery heat, the next shivering with damp cold. She felt as though her whole body was strung on wires or catgut strings that kept up a ceaseless, vibrating hum. But he, what would he say if he should hear that she was dead, that she had died for his sake ? He would surely feel that it was a beautiful fate to be so greatly loved. That feeling would never leave him all his days ; would always

be about his path and consecrate his every thought and deed. Pain in its beauty would be a diadem upon his brow. Hetty thought of Charlotte Stieglitz, and how everyone had praised her deed. She too would have the same courage. If only she knew that it would be for his good. She would take her long clasp, the old silver one that Uncle Jason had once given her, and would push its fine sharp pin in slowly here, very slowly, deep into the white skin below her left bosom.

Hetty could feel the long-drawn-out, piercing pain, a pain with a keen point, and could see the grey silver pin quietly sink into the white flesh until it was quite buried, as if embedded in a down cushion. Her tears fell once more and her head sank nervelessly again down to the warmth of her bare, folded arms, limp and heavy, just as a dark thick-leaved tulip bends to the ground.

Then Hetty seemed to hear steps coming flap, flap, as of bare feet across the boards, but she did not lift her head.

"Hetty," Wolfgang said very shyly, laying his warm child's hand on her neck, "you must not keep on crying like this."

"Oh, what do you know about it?" Hetty answered in a smothered tone and with her tears still falling.

But Wolfgang only nodded his head with precocious wisdom.

"It is not right of you to go on crying like that. Listen, I love you too."

"Yes, you!" Hetty sobbed.

But, by then, Wolfgang had already encircled her neck with both arms. "You must not cry! I cannot bear to hear it," he repeated again and again.

Hetty drew the lad who stood before her in his long white nightshirt, trembling a little with cold, on to her lap, threw her arms round him and kissed him on forehead and lips. And those kisses of once before, with their fiery passion, their ardour and warmth, seemed once more to be pressed upon her



mouth. But the little fellow in his white shirt, not in the least knowing how he felt, returned with parted lips these caresses that really were meant for another. Every trace of sadness had flown from Hetty; in a moment it was gone, and fresh courage and zest ran through her veins. Then she lifted the boy in her arms and carried him into the dark room to his bed.

“There, Wolfgang,” and to her own amazement she even laughed; “now off you go to sleep again.”

When this was said, Hetty went over to her own bed, very quietly slipped off her things and crept under the blanket. And whilst she was already sleeping a sound and dreamless sleep—for her day had been a very busy one—Wolfgang still lay with hot wide-open eyes, full of feverish fancies as he remembered the kisses and tenderness. And if his mouth touched the sheet a quiver passed through him and he thought his lips were once more pressed against Hetty’s cheeks, her cool white temples and the locks of her beautiful hair.

\* \* \* \* \*

And things came as come they must; everything as come it must.

The lilac, the beautiful young lilac with its blue blossoms turned brown and withered, the laburnum soon waved only green seed-pods in the air instead of its golden banners, the hawthorn flowers sank away among the leaves, and the cherry-trees caught one’s eye, even at a distance, with their little coral-red fruit shining amongst the branches. The birds, too, had exchanged their unwearying songs for nothing but slow, lazy or quarrelsome chirping in the early morning.

Instead of the thousands of blossoms on lilac, laburnum, hawthorn and on all the bushes round about, all that was left was only the innumerable yellow honey-scented drops on the four wide rows of lime-trees on either side of the road. The bees hummed

amongst the leaves till far into the evening, so that Hetty, now often sitting silently at the window, always thought it was a big kettle of water boiling somewhere in the distance that was making all this singing and bubbling.

And the fine spring days, when each seemed to vie with its neighbour in beauty, were followed by days of high wind, sweeping through the trees, and of splashing rain that absolutely tore the leaves off the branches and then, like a bad boy, stamped them to pieces on the ground.

Then came days of relentless heat, when everything hung limp and faded and it was quite impossible to get enough water to refresh the garden ; days when it was so hot that Hetty could scarcely get outside the house before the evening ; days when every vehicle brought fresh clouds of dust, which were driven on by each new puff of wind and settled before Hetty's very eyes in the front garden as a grey film on the foliage of the dark-green bushes. Moreover, if in these hot days a reluctant evening shower really sent a few heavy drops pattering on to the leaves, it in no way washed off this film, but only sprinkled the leaves till they showed a gay check pattern.

But away amongst the fruit-trees Hetty saw but little dust and all was still green and bright, even if spring's first delicate tints had long since vanished and everything had grown so luxuriant and rampant that Hetty was no longer surrounded, as in spring, with tender bushes, but entrenched on every side by strong, impenetrable barriers.

New summer flowers were always appearing in friendly confusion ; cheek by jowl the crowded stems of gillyflowers and stocks, amaranth, lobelia, convolvulus, and even the first early asters, had already come to join the gay company. New fruits, too, were ripening there from day to day, white pearls hanging on the currant-bushes, great drops of blood below the strawberry-leaves and red tears on the raspberry-canecanes. The quinces hung green and velvety on the



branches, the pears were turning red and brown already, and only the apples, still green and yellow, were biding their time until the coming of the late sunny autumn days. And if the flowers were tempted to hang their limp and weary heads in the midday heat, these others—these promises fulfilled—did but sun themselves more cheerfully in the dazzling, all-pervading glare.

But in the town this summer was unbearably close and sultry in the hazy air of the streets. Unwholesome vapours rose from the Spree and the canals and, as happened every year at this hot season, rumours were rife of illness, low fever and typhus, and the newspapers reported epidemics creeping round the world like hungry wolves in ever-narrowing circles. Report was no less busy with the bad state of the King's health. Some said he might die any day and others whispered that since the next year was 1840, evil happenings were sure to come. All Berlin was in a fever of excitement. Desires and probabilities, that at another time would scarcely have been mentioned in private, were now openly discussed on every side, in restaurants, in students' class-rooms and, thinly veiled, even in the newspapers as well. Some people expected everything, others nothing; indeed, it was even said to be a bad sign that Professor Savigny was again attacking Gans, and jokes and comic poems circulated in Berlin about Hengstenberg and the Pietists, about the Crown Prince, the new Cathedral and the path to Jerusalem. What was asserted one day was contradicted the next, and the more unbridled the reports concerning those in authority, the tighter the gag applied by police and censor.

Jason, richer, as we have already said, by a breast-pin of Karlsbad pebbles—it was the size of a man's thumb-nail—and in the possession of a goblet of ruby glass, had once more said good-bye for a year to gay silk waistcoats, bidden farewell to silken wraps, and was now quite in the swim of things again. He had his days fully occupied, listening and discussing

with others, looking through all the papers, and weighing chances and possibilities ; for, although at heart he was a red-hot republican, he was yet clever enough only to reckon with existing circumstances.

To Hetty, at Charlottenburg, however, this all came only as the breaking of the billows on some distant shore which the listener may mistake for nothing more than a vehicle driving over some wood-paved road. And if she chanced at any time to come into Berlin, Hetty, even then, noticed little of what was in the air, for people bustled through the streets just as busy with their own affairs and as unconcerned as usual. If Uncle Jason had not sometimes brought out a little inflammatory literature, Hetty would certainly have heard next to nothing from her Uncles Solomon and Ferdinand, who—Heaven knows why—so often now had something to do in Charlottenburg, in company with the new cousin Julius. The two older men, indeed, did sometimes discuss public affairs, but the new cousin Julius stated brusquely that politics were ruinous ; a sensible man had plenty to do with his business, and such things only made him neglect his work. Even if his hearers could not entirely dispute the truth of these maxims, they nevertheless sounded somewhat strange on the new cousin's lips. For the arrangements for his own business were not nearly settled yet, as far as could be seen, and whenever he stated with absolute certainty that at last every difficulty had been overcome, the very next time he came a whole series of fresh, unexpected hindrances had arisen which he had to circumnavigate with the skill of a whaler caught amongst the icebergs' towering peaks.

But the new cousin Julius never let such things make him sing any smaller, nor did his failures seem to have any adverse effect either upon his physical or mental well-being ; he always looked equally fit and rosy, and declared he was no loser by it—perhaps, indeed, a gainer, as his season really only began in the



winter. . . . Who knows but that he was right there too?

Uncle Ferdinand, however, had certainly every reason to be pleased, for his business in the spring and succeeding summer, as far as could be seen, up till now, had exceeded all expectations and he was now floating like a cork on the very top of a wave of success. He had settled his family in Schöneberg, in such a tiny house that, if Jason was to be believed, a man could put his hand on the top of the chimney until all the inmates had to cough and hasten to throw open the windows. But, all the same, the house had a beautiful large garden running down to the open fields too—not nearly so stuffy as the Charlottenburg garden, Aunt Janey affirmed. Besides, the price was quite reasonable, Ferdinand said, feeling that such thoughtfulness on his part marked him out as a model husband and father and fully acquitted him of all other obligations to his family.

Old Aunt Minnie, though, told Hetty a mysterious tale about a person, a real “person,” who had come bustling like a water-wagtail out of a house—she would not say which—in Kloster Street and then, from the other side, had waved to an upstairs window; she would not say which. Yes! She wouldn’t say any more, but it didn’t seem quite the thing to her, and if she were Aunt Janey, she would make a few inquiries. But she—Aunt Minnie—would, of course, take good care not to put her fingers in that pie.

As we have remarked before, worthy Aunt Minnie knew no evil, and she would have been astounded, would worthy Aunt Minnie, if she had realized that her keen-sighted observation told her niece no news, for Janey even knew the “real person’s” name and where she lived.

And so Ferdinand Geybert’s affairs were very flourishing this summer.

But Solomon Geybert’s were not doing so badly either. Solomon, as we have already said, had come home from Karlsbad and Leipzig completely satisfied,

and he continued to look well right into the autumn and until the air of his Berlin office had gradually wiped off his veneer of health and vigour. Every Wednesday and Saturday evening he enjoyed hearing Aunt Rika say that anyone would take him for an English lord with his air of distinction and agility. For Solomon was at business all the week, only coming, as a rule, on Wednesday and without fail on Saturday and Sunday to Charlottenburg, for he hated having to drive out. Thus husband and wife saw one another but seldom, and consequently they were on much better terms and not nearly so disposed to differ as in winter and spring. But the delighted Aunt Minnie's assertion that Solomon and Rika—a great contrast to Ferdinand and Janey—now lived like lovers, was perhaps not quite in accordance with actual fact.

She herself—Aunt Minnie—was unhappy in her married life. Not like Janey and Ferdinand—Heaven forbid—but her Eli was growing stranger every day. Sometimes he heard nothing and sometimes said nothing. As these two conditions were never coincident, and as, so Aunt Minnie said, he talked a great deal on his deaf days, and therefore on his chatty days heard badly, whilst he said little the days he could hear well, there was no managing at all with him. Besides, the lump on Eli's head was always getting bigger, just up there on his head; it frightened Minnie. As she said, you never knew. The doctor, of course, said it was of no importance, but what does a doctor like that know?

So there really was nothing more to be said, and everyone's life ran its course in the most charming monotony and unity, ran as smoothly as cotton on a machine-spool, and when Aunt Rika said, "The Wednesday after next, when Solomon comes, I shall have tongue and green peas again," then, exactly at the appointed hour, Solomon came, and shortly after a tongue, a beautiful smoked, salted tongue and a great dish full of steaming, young peas appeared on



the table. There was plenty for supper, no doubt of that. And there was not an angry or quarrelsome word and no little disputes as usual, but they were all pleasant to each other and merry, for the uncle always brought back a dozen fresh jokes from the town that he wove into an amusing puzzle-game by piecing the heads and tails of one on to the foundation of another, and sometimes even three ran into one another. They made expeditions as well, went to garden concerts, gave parties and Italian evenings with tiny coloured lamps in the garden ; in short, enjoyed themselves to the full. The marks on the export cases had long since risen from S.G. Co. 16 to S.G. Co. 107, if not higher, and even if the bills of exchange were really long instead of short, that accommodated itself in a few days again or they were cleverly discounted by way of Russia, so that ultimately loss was turned into profit. In short, life was a joy amongst the Geyberts.

Well, of course everything is never quite smooth ! Wolfgang was not specially well, but, as they said, no doubt that was just his age and would pass later. Without knowing it, he had, in his week out at Charlottenburg, helped Hetty over difficult days. Hetty had grown even fonder of him than before, because he was so quiet and so grateful for every kind word or look. Then that affair with Hetty herself ; not a word was said about it ; indeed, they tried to dismiss it from their thoughts even. But of course it would pass in time, and as a reasonable being she would naturally get over it. The best plan was to pretend to know nothing. And they were so affectionate to Hetty—all of them, Janey as well as Ferdinand, Jason and Minnie—as affectionate as possible. Uncle Solómon was almost tender to her, and her aunt acted as if any little help Hetty might give in the housekeeping was a favour for which she could never be grateful enough. Indeed, there had been scarcely a sharp word uttered in the whole matter.

This was just what had broken Hetty's passive

resistance, for indeed the greatest tyranny is found where there are no commands, no angry words. It is always so easy to be stiff-necked when others are unkind and hard, and equally difficult when they are soft-spoken and gentle ; and it is always so easy to carry through your own will against opposition, and no less difficult when no one contradicts and you do it at your own risk. For when others take up an adverse attitude they seem to relieve you of the responsibility which otherwise weighs entirely on your own shoulders.

During the first weeks, Hetty was always wanting to broach the subject of Kossling ; she had so firmly resolved to speak to her uncle about him—when he came. Then her uncle did come, got out of the carriage with such delight, kissed her, put his arm round his wife, brought them both flowers and bonbons, never stopped talking all dinner-time, and was so frank and unsuspecting, never even making the slightest allusion to what had happened or pausing for a moment to give Hetty an opportunity of putting in a word, so that she could only sit by and listen in silence. And when he went away again early the next morning or on the Monday, she had not yet spoken to him and determined to catch her uncle the very next time, come what might. But when the day came round again she turned shy once more and, as soon as it was past, really felt relieved to have deferred the explanation till another time.

Even if Hetty's nights at first were sleepless and her solitude bedewed with tears, yet life came every day anew with all its demands—with a hundred people that wanted to consult Hetty ; with the charge of the housekeeping, which still, after as before, rested entirely on Hetty's shoulders ; with walks and garden concerts, to which she had to go with her aunt ; with sewing for birthdays, and news, with papers and books. At first Hetty had read away at the books, spending an hour over one page and at the end not knowing a word that was on it, but by slow degrees, books



took their former place in her life and she was glad to have them.

And what was it she wanted to tell her uncle? Someone had come, they had met once or twice, had told each other of their love, then the other had gone away and she had heard nothing more of him. It was like a dream that passes as we open our eyes to daylight; a dream that, as a whole, becomes clearer in our memory whilst its details slowly fade, become disjointed and seem unfounded. But the dream itself, in its depth and brightness, shines upon our path and never leaves us wherever we may go. And so it was with Hetty.

Week after week passed. Hetty seized every opportunity to go into the city, invented excuses and errands, which she so divided that she never brought much back with her, intentionally forgot one thing or another, so that she might have to go into Berlin again—but she never met Kossling. If she thought she saw him coming from the distance in the sunny hot König Street, and trembled with shaking knees, it was always a disappointment and someone passed her indifferently, not the least like Kossling, not even in his gait. Hetty had often wanted to write to Kossling, but then she remembered, with a feeling of shame, that she had no idea where he lived; then her pride rebelled: could he not write, if he wanted anything? But no doubt he did not wish to hear any more about her. Although Hetty had practically never suffered for her Jewish birth—for, thanks to her winning charm and dignity, the beautiful girl had, all her life, only met with kindly faces wherever she went—although, so far, she had never suffered for it, yet sometimes she had a suspicion that this, perhaps, was the reason why Kossling kept away. And for days she would find new accusations against Kossling, intermingled with tears and protestations, with self-torture and reproach. Then there were again days when Hetty understood Kossling completely, when she said to herself he had been refused and had left

her without a word, not to make it harder for them both. Perhaps it was better so. But then Hetty felt as if she must go herself to Kossling and tell him that she was his, and that, far from depriving her of anything, he only enriched her, and that it would ever be her one joy to bear every deprivation at his side ; if he did but wish it, she would go to him the next day, regardless of what the world would say ; if only he had the courage to face it, hers would not fail. After this, however, Hetty would tell herself that Kossling was ill and alone and that she must go and nurse him ; for days she would be under the dominance of this idea with all its palpably evident suggestions ; again she was continually a prey to innumerable sensations that she was too small and insignificant for Kossling, and therefore he had walked away and left her.

Scarcely a day, scarcely an hour, passed when Hetty was not drawn aimlessly along by this never-ending chain of thoughts or wrong conclusions, and her mind, already half distraught, was caught anew in fresh toils, whilst from the only one who could have given her any enlightenment, from Jason, Hetty could get nothing at all.

At first, after that Sunday, Jason had not come to Charlottenburg for many a long week, and then, when Hetty did at last see him, and seized a moment when they were free from observation to ask him about Kossling, his only answer was an embarrassed smile and a pat on her cheek, as he said he had, for a long time, not heard anything of Kossling. That was all. And once afterwards, when Jason and the others came out on Sunday—all of them, as well as one and another that her uncle brought with him—and Hetty asked Jason privately about Kossling, she only got a kindly smile and a sympathetic glance, but not a word to throw any light on the position. Yet Jason himself was full of inward pride in his cleverness in neither arousing nor destroying Hetty's hopes.



Weeks followed weeks, and if Hetty had not noticed the changes in the garden—for since that Sunday she had found it too painful ever to go into the park again—she would have had no idea how time was passing, whether it was still June or already August or even September—the days and nights merged so quietly and unnoticed one into another and life flowed on in such quiet monotony, whilst not a day brought her nearer to any goal. At first she had at least greeted each new day and each new book with pleasure, hoping from the one some change in her lot, some beauty from the other, but now she began the new morning in listless silence and picked up the new book with no expectations and laid it down again, having gained nothing. It distracted her mind, occupied her for a time indeed, but the effect soon wore off.

Now as Hetty slept but little at night and still shed many tears when she was alone—although her pain had grown more shadowy—her appearance and her face began to tell their own tale; she began to lose her brightness of colour just as her quickness of movement and dignity of bearing showed signs of diminishing. Most of all, her eyes, which had always held some inquiring wonder as well as a beautiful inner calm in their bright velvet depths, now often lay—whenever Hetty fancied herself unobserved—like two hard black stones in her pale face. Hetty felt this change, for she loved her beauty as a dear friend, but she was powerless to fight against it, and one morning even, when she saw a grey hair running from her parting in front to the back of her head, she felt it was not worth while to pull it out. Indeed, it went so far that she, who had always been fond of pretty things and had liked to dress nicely and in good taste, now neglected it all and her aunt had to call her attention to a missing button or a loose braid.

This did not escape her uncle's notice, and one evening—the walls being thin in Charlottenburg—

Hetty heard him mention it to his wife. But her aunt replied there was nothing strange in that, it was always the same with unmarried girls of that age, and, for her part, she could not understand why Hetty had not found a husband long since. Then Uncle Solomon grew angry, and said furiously she was always reproaching him about it as if it was his fault ; did she suppose he could take the girl on his back and offer her for sale to all and sundry? Surely that was not required of him. Then Aunt Rika begged and implored him to speak more softly, for every word could, no doubt, be heard in the other room.

If Hetty had heard this a few weeks before it would have excited and worried her for days, but now she took it quite calmly. The following morning, indeed, the memory revived in her and again once more in a few unguarded moments, but soon it died away entirely, swallowed up by the dull monotony of her days, untouched by any outward change, like those forest lakes whose waters are always smooth and black, however much the wind may rush through the tree-trunks or roar above them.

Week after week passed ; the evenings grew longer and her aunt began once more to drink her cup of tea into which she dropped three or four lumps of orange sugar, which, she maintained, was not so good anywhere as here in Charlottenburg at the apothecary Niemann's shop. Outside in the orchard all the red had disappeared and only apples, late pears and quinces still hung on the boughs, already not quite so impenetrable, and with their dark-green summer leaves now a little paler, here and there, indeed, even showing a little touch of yellow. And after a few rainy days with their grey drip and drizzle covering everything, even the tall garden trees, that had so far scouted the very idea of autumn, showed whole branches of brightest yellow in the midst of their summer foliage. Even when there was no wind, one or another leaf, yellow or maybe still almost green, broke off and floated peacefully down on to the paths,



into the bushes, or danced away into the corner of the summer-house, where Hetty was sitting all alone. Yet the days were wonderfully fine and the sun shone bright and warm through the pale-blue air on to the great yellow rows of dahlias and on the tall, thick beds of homely cottage flowers, many-coloured phlox and purple amaranth. The swallows were practising their flight over the bare meadows at the back, and hundreds of white butterflies flashed their silvery wings outside over fields and hedges and inside above the flower borders and bushes in one continual coming and going.

Aunt Rika was already anxious to go home again, for she no longer knew how to occupy herself, out in the country, but Uncle Solomon assured her there was nothing to gain by going back to the town, and they should just stay in the fine air as long as possible ; besides, there was a great deal of typhus in Berlin, and, on that account, he would rather they did not come yet ; also, as a last argument, hadn't the summer rent for their lodgings been high enough to make it a pity to give them up before their time was quite out ?

And though all other arguments might have failed, the fact of typhus in the town was enough to convince Aunt Rika. For although she had never known, so far, what illness meant and had, indeed, escaped the pains that fall to the lot of most women, yet she had a holy terror of any ill that might befall her own physical welfare. She even went so far that she never visited an invalid and would not have hesitated to leave her own husband to be nursed by strangers rather than her own precious body should run any risk.

Then came a few specially fine days, as warm as any in summer, when, if it had not been for the motionless, yellow leaves on the trees, the last rampant growth on all sides and the twilight that so early stole the sunshine from the warm days and turned them into damp darkness, no one would have believed

that it was October already ; indeed, in the city, there were scarcely any signs of it.

So Aunt Rika said she would like to see all the family out there once more, for who could tell how long the fine weather might last ; and Uncle Solomon sent his man, Gustav, to Stein Road to Minnie and Eli, to Ferdinand's house, for his family were back again now, to Jason in Kloster Street, and to Julius, who lodged somewhere or other in Parochial Street ; an invitation went as well to the old lady with the poodle curls ; indeed, he would have asked other acquaintances too, but Aunt Rika said, no strange faces, she would rather, as this was the last time they would all be together, out here, just have only the family. And they had better come the very next day, Thursday, in the afternoon, for who could tell if it would still be fine on Sunday ? But it would certainly last till to-morrow, and there was nothing attractive in Charlottenburg if they could not be out in the beautiful garden.

So about three o'clock there really came in the warm, bright sunshine, between the two yellow rows of lime-trees, slowly bestrewing the road with their golden, dancing leaves—there came along, from the little toll-house below, two carriages, each with a pair of horses, one behind the other. Hetty saw them coming from a long way off, for they were the only vehicles going either way on the road, deserted at this late season, when practically no one drove out for pleasure. Aunt Rika was fussing and fuming with impatience, and then, taking Hetty's arm—a thing she never did as a rule—she went with her out of the front door to await her guests. As the horses, however, came along very leisurely at the end of their journey, it was quite a long time before the carriages arrived, and Hetty, arm-in-arm with her aunt, strolled in the bright sunshine along the low, green, little fence which separated the front garden from the road.

“ Come now, Hetty,” her aunt said with a smile,



speaking slowly and thoughtfully ; “ aren’t you glad ? I think Julius is coming too.”

Hetty could truthfully answer that she was indeed glad the visitors were coming, for, after the monotony of the last few weeks, any distraction was pleasant, and her aunt took her assurance as inclusive of her nephew Julius, to whom, however, it did not in the least refer.

“ Yes,” Aunt Rika said, “ he is really a man you cannot help liking. I fancy, go where he may, he will get anyone he wants. His old chief in Posen wrote lately to Solomon—they had some business between them—really you ought to have read it, Hetty. He evidently doesn’t know how to praise Julius enough.”

Hetty accepted this news, as she did everything, with outward friendliness, but inwardly with entire indifference and lack of interest, for, lately, but an infinitesimal part of her thoughts had turned towards Julius and all good or evil report of him left her equally unmoved. In the last few months she had often seen him at Charlottenburg, so that her first aversion had changed to indifference . . . just as we get used to everything, and all the more quickly if we are too absorbed in our feelings to pay much real attention to life’s superficialities.

And there he was himself—the object of Aunt Rika’s praises—the very first of all the visitors to appear, for the new cousin Julius, short and broad as he was, sat enthroned on the box-seat of the first carriage and waved his grey top-hat from afar. He was also the first to spring down from his front seat in one jump, landing with closed feet, whilst all the others took their time. Only Max was wanting, for he had stayed at home since, of course, somebody had to look after the business. Jason also explained that he had very nearly not come, as he hadn’t been feeling quite the thing for the last few days, although he thought he was a little better again that afternoon. But Hetty was shocked as she saw that Jason really looked very pale, with the hard lines in his thin face deeper than

ever and the hand he gave her very hot and dry as it lay for a moment in hers.

"Uncle, are you sure you are not ill?" she inquired anxiously.

But Jason only gave a little laugh as he answered: "Oh, it's nothing much, and will soon pass again."

"Really!" Julius remarked in his full, oily voice. "In your place, I should be nervous, Herr Geybert. You haven't much of a constitution, and look like a dying man."

Jason's lips again curled into a smile, but it was somewhat forced. "Thank you," he remarked in a tone that, under its apparent friendliness, expressed, as Hetty knew only too well, the deepest displeasure and contempt which Jason Geybert was capable of feeling.

"But, Herr Geybert, you misunderstand me; you ought to see a doctor. I am really only thinking of your welfare."

"It will go of itself. I am not fond of going to doctors," Jason answered, but his voice trailed off in utter weariness of body and mind. "Let it pass! What does it matter!"

"Really, Jason, if you are not well, you ought to have stayed at home," said Rika, retreating a step. "Of course I only mean because you could look after yourself better there."

"Yes," added Eli, "I told him that. I even said I would stay with him and we could have a little game of piquet, but do you think the lad would listen to me?"

"Come now!" Jason spoke indignantly, for he disliked being fussed over. "I certainly could not fail to be present in such an illustrious gathering as this."

"I say, Jason, I'll tell you of a remedy afterwards." And the little grey Aunt Minnie pressed up to him in kindly fashion. "Try it first, and if it is of no use then go to the doctor. I have had more success in my life than many a doctor, I tell you."



Jason could not but remember that Minnie and Eli had had to say good-bye to all their children, so he was not absolutely convinced of the infallibility of Minnie's homely remedy. He did, in truth, feel wretched, not by any means so well as he assured them all with a weary smile. The whole way he had regretted having come, for he felt as though consumed by an inward fire and his head was full of flaming wheels.

Jenny rushed up to Hetty with but the one exclamation: "Just look at my frock!" whilst Wolfgang shook hands with a quiet, careless air, as much as to say, "What need to let the others know how we two stand to each other?" And the lad had passed the whole of the drive there, daydreaming about Hetty. Janey was out of all patience because one of the ribs of her sunshade was broken and she could not get it shut, so on a very flimsy pretext she boxed Wolfgang's ears with a quick, sharp slap of her be-ringed, sausage-fingers. The rings hurt him, but the little old lady with the poodle curls threw her arms round the poor boy and kissed him to make up for the blow—and this Wolfgang, very possibly, felt even more painful; for he was now spoilt and critical where caresses were concerned. Janey's ill-humour was plainly written on her face, whilst Ferdinand, with an impudent twinkle in the corners of his eyes, pointed to the trees and roused the echoes with a shout of "Welcome to the yellow fields!" He enjoyed making his jokes harmonize with the season. Ferdinand and Janey's moods, it must be said, were always like the scales at either end of a balance—if one was up, the other was down; and as Ferdinand now happened to be up in the clouds, Janey had specially good reasons for being in the depths.

Solomon led the way into the house with Julius; the two sisters followed, quietly whispering to one another; then came the children on either side of the little old lady, both of them proud that they now overtopped her. Hetty followed on with Minnie and

Eli, who was once more subjecting Ferdinand's horseflesh—of course he knew nothing about carriages!—to a destructive criticism. Last of all, Jason came slowly limping along, left all to himself—as a sick man always is, quickly deserted by his fellows after a few kindly words.

Since they had come after dinner—for Aunt Rika had said everything was not to be got so quickly in Charlottenburg and so they could only invite them in the afternoon—well, since they had come after dinner, the coffee-table laid in the dining-room, no longer green, but flooded with the golden-yellow reflection of the autumn-tinted chestnut-trees in the courtyard—the coffee-table then was the more richly provided with delicacies. And if it should be called a coffee-table it could only be after the manner of the Romans, who delighted in naming a part for the whole and only spoke of the point when they meant the whole spear with its ash-wood shaft and its leathern sling. For here there was coffee and tea, mineral waters and wine—red and white—fancy dishes and cakes, white china bowls with crinkled edges full of sweetmeats, each wrapped in coloured lace paper. And the somewhat more masculine taste was catered for with great pyramids of sandwiches of tongue, smoked meat and all kinds of fish. Farther up, beside the cigars and lighters, stood fat, red and yellow bottles with their train of tiny glasses holding no more than a thimbleful each.

In accordance with her tactics of old, Aunt Rika had brought up all her forces at once to face the enemy. And had he been twice as strong, they would still have gained the day, for an unseen hand seemed to fill the breaches in the stacks of cakes and rolls as soon as they were made by the men's sturdy courage and the children's promising perseverance, united with the women's self-sacrifice. And apparently no too ready tongue had so far disclosed—a marvel in that company—the secret of the unending capacity of the tea and coffee pots.



Eli remarked that, for his part, he did not understand how they could all eat again already ; he supposed it must be the air out there that gave them such appetites.

Jason, having revived a little under the influence of the tea, which he had strongly flavoured with rum, propounded a riddle, touching on politics, of course.

“ What is the difference between Daguerre and Metternich ? ”

No one knew, and the men tried to think, nodding and shaking their heads, whilst the ladies went on discussing the thousand nothings that come so easily to women’s tongues.

“ The first makes sun-pictures and the second a *camera obscura* for Germany.”

“ Splendid ! ” Ferdinand cried, with great emphasis on the “ splen.”

“ I can’t laugh at it. I don’t understand in the least,” Janey commented in a sharp, quarrelsome tone, shaking her head till she almost shook down her wonderful erection of hair as well.

“ Of course you don’t,” snapped Ferdinand ; “ when do you ever understand a joke ? ”

But Solomon, in his anxiety to quell these rising hostilities, broke in with : “ I must really make a note of this about Lafayette and Metternich.”

“ Excuse me,” interrupted Julius, “ Herr Jason Geybert spoke, didn’t he, of Daguerre ? ”

“ Oh well, Daguerre then.”

Julius smiled politely. “ But perhaps I may be allowed to give you a riddle that the ladies can enjoy as well.”

“ Oh yes, Julius,” exclaimed Janey, who was anxious to play off her nephew against Jason.

Julius grasped his brow and recited very slowly, straining his memory at every line :

“ What is it we are in many a thing ?

What in death, yet never that !

What those, whom to the grave we bring ?

Though they are never, never that !  
And—h'm—h'm—because we're living,  
What is't we are in heart and sight ?  
And just because we still have being  
What is't we cannot be aright ? ”

Hetty and Jason exchanged nods with a smile.

“ Well ? ” said Solomon.

“ Well, perhaps someone can guess it ? ”

“ Come, Hetty,” Aunt Rika urged in kindly, genial tones, “ just show what you know.”

But Hetty only pretended to meditate deeply, and then shook her head.

“ Jason,” exclaimed Janey, “ give the answer ! ”

“ Excuse me, but please say it again ; it has quite confused me,” said Eli ; “ besides, I couldn't hear half of it.”

At last it came out that the answer was “ parted.” And because we live we surely are—parted ! And because we live until to-day we are not yet—parted !

“ Magnificent ! ” Janey repeated again and again. “ Magnificent . . . a very different matter from your Lafayette, Jason ! ”

“ Very pretty ! ” was Jason's comment. “ Very pretty ! Is it your own ? ”

Julius gave no answer, but his round face and his Jacoby black jet eyes beamed with satisfaction.

“ If you like, you need not hesitate to claim it as yours ; not a soul here, except Hetty and me, knows Schleiermacher, and we shall not give you away, Herr Jacoby.”

Janey turned quite pale. Julius flushed up, but quickly regained his self-possession. “ Well, anyone could hear at once that it was said by someone who had learnt it,” he answered in some confusion.

“ I must walk about a little now,” Ferdinand remarked, to break the painful silence. And he stood up. “ Whatever are we sitting here for ? That's not why we come out to Charlottenburg.”

“ He's right there,” Eli agreed. Rika said some of the refreshments could be taken outside, and the



whole company broke up and strolled out in twos and threes to the garden ; but, as the children were not quite sure that Aunt Rika would keep her promise and have refreshments outside, they provided for all contingencies with secret supplies from the crinkly china bowls and the dishes of coffee-cakes, which Eli had so far besieged with but indifferent success. The men took cigars, except Jason, who said they did not taste right just now and instead remained faithful to the contents of the fat, red, yellow and green bottles in the hope that they would help him to pull himself together.

The foliage was already less thick in the gardens and everywhere interpenetrated by the warm rays of the autumn sun. The unswept paths were soft as carpets to the tread, covered as they were with wrinkled brown elm-leaves, still glistening in the shade with the dew of the night before, and with the golden oak-leaves lying on the dark earth that showed all the beauty of their dentated edges ; and over all a sprinkling of little red leaves that had floated down from the wild vine. Only the golden yellow on the boughs shone doubly bright in the sunshine, whilst the purple and red with all the other deep fiery, autumnal tints in chestnut and oak, cherry-tree and hawthorn, alder and guelder-tree, were softened by the distinct pale-blue shade of the atmosphere flickering down so silently on this cloudless autumn day with its sickly, depressing beauty. On all the bushes spiders had spun their webs, sparkling all day long with the moisture that so clearly marked the delicacy of their construction. Hetty, in the last few days, had often looked at them, admiring the wonderful variety of these little suns, always appearing with such beautiful regularity, no matter how confused and intermingled the branches on which the spider spun her web.

But Aunt Janey really had no feeling for the delicate technique of a spider's web, and exclaimed that, had she known about them, she would certainly not have come out. Then Julius showed his chivalry by

destroying with a small stick all the webs that the artistic little, many-footed weavers had woven between the slanting supports in the walls of the arbour.

The company soon divided into separate groups. Wolfgang and Jenny, in secret rivalry, attached themselves to Hetty, and cousin Julius accounted himself amongst the young folk too ; so Hetty strolled with him and the children slowly along the narrow paths away into the orchard and up and down the flower-garden. The womenfolk had had a garden-seat put on the bright, green lawn in the full sun, and sat there, with their knitting, sewing and tireless tongues, all in a row, Minnie, Janey, the old lady with her tight curls and Rika in their grey, old rose and purple gowns like a gay mountain range intersected by valleys, these latter being represented by Minnie and the old lady.

The men were in their old summer-house, swept clear that morning of all its withered leaves, but bestrewn again now with stalks, twigs and berries as well as with red and yellow leaves. Ferdinand had proposed a game of cards, but Solomon preferred to talk and Jason said he could not fix his mind on it. For, although the tea had done him good for a short time and made him a little more responsive to his surroundings, he felt wretched again now, as though consumed with inward fires. His thoughts, too, ran in one confused, unbroken stream, without pause or stop of any kind, going on and on, so interwoven with impossibilities and incoherence that he was terrified in the moments when he managed to pull himself together ; but, as soon as he tried to get to the root of the matter, everything began to float on again and carried him with it. So Jason got up, saying he would walk up and down a little, for he was tormented by inner restlessness and listened anxiously to hear if he said what he meant and did not bring out some quite senseless remark for which he was not really responsible. He said, however, quite clearly and



distinctly, that in this lovely weather he would rather walk about than sit.

The others looked after him. "I don't like his looks," Eli remarked, meditatively sucking his cigar.

"He should try slices of cucumber on his head; they always cure my sick headaches—that's all that's wrong with him," Ferdinand observed.

"Well now, I wanted to talk with you," said Solomon; "a pity that Jason has just gone away. I should like to know what you think about it. Here, will you look at these letters, Ferdinand?" Solomon hunted through his breast-pocket. "Here, you see, his former head in Posen writes to me, and I have made inquiries of two others as well; and here are the answers, outdoing one another in their praise."

"What is it?" inquired Eli, who couldn't hear very well to-day and wanted to have everything repeated twice. "What is it, Solomon? Who are you really talking about?"

"About Julius."

"Oh, is that it? Yes, that young man. Do you mean to give him money?—because, do you know, Solomon, I wouldn't do it."

"Why not?" queried Solomon quite calmly.

"I don't like him. He is a cunning fellow; as I have told you once before; but one never knows—perhaps I am wrong for once, although I have never made a mistake before. What is the young man, then?"

"He has a leather business, or he will——"

"Leather!" Eli interrupted. "Is that it? Leather is quite a good branch. Yes, you need not be afraid to give him something; he'll be safe—that is, if he is a decent fellow; otherwise . . ."

"Yes," Solomon answered, "but, just at present, it is no question of money. Julius, you must know, has told me he cares for Hetty, and I wanted to ask you what you thought about it."

"Dear Solomon," Eli calmly answered, "I'll tell you something: no one puts a silk patch on a rag-

man's sack ; your own business should have taught you that."

Solomon did not answer. Ferdinand handed the letters back in silence, as though he had not heard Eli's remark, then added : " I should not hesitate."

" Now, Eli," Solomon asked, " will you look at them? "

" I don't need to read them—letters say anything—paper is long-suffering."

" But, Eli," Solomon urged, " I beg of you to read them."

" What am I to say to you, Solomon? Do what you like. You, all of you, want to force the girl into unhappiness. Well, do it then, but leave me out of the business ! If you ask me, I say : ' No, hands off ! ' But, in my opinion, it is better you shouldn't ask me."

" Dear Eli," said Solomon, who was always accustomed to carry on a discussion calmly, even if his opponent grew hot, " there is no question of force. If Hetty does not wish it, then no ; I shall not force her, you know me too well for that."

" Well," Eli answered peevishly, " then what I say is, leave it to Hetty. What business is it of mine? If you think he is a good young man, then you are right."

Solomon accepted this as half-consent, just as we all only find in others' speech exactly what we want to hear.

" I should be greatly in favour of it, Solomon ; you couldn't possibly get a better report. What good is it, if anyone comes with a sackful of money and afterwards you find he comes of a poor kind of family? "

" Yes," said Solomon, " that's it, Ferdinand, the family is my chief consideration."

" Come now," put in Eli, but that's something you'll have to put your name to, if we're to believe it."

" What's that? " Solomon asked sharply.

" Well," Eli remarked with great equanimity and



without taking his cigar out of his mouth, "I only thought that family was really not much to boast of."

It was one of Uncle Eli's failings that, in spite of his long apprenticeship, he had still not yet learnt to speak other than he thought; and, things being as they were, in all probability he never would learn either.

Ferdinand and Solomon both told Eli that he insulted them with such statements, for he surely entirely forgot that Rika and Janey, although they had become thorough Geyberts, were still by birth Jacobys. And Eli, whose nature it was to give ruthless expression to any opinion he held, but who was not man enough to make a lengthy defence of it in face of opposition, assured them that, of course, he hadn't meant that—and after all what concern was it of his? He didn't want to marry the young man—that, of course, must be left for Hetty to decide. But God grant she would take care to say no.

Meantime, however, Hetty was walking up and down with the new cousin Julius and the children on the broad path between flower-beds, sunny walls and hedges.

They always went round the four sides of a square, walking very slowly past the bright flower-borders of phlox and asters, dahlias and jalap, amaranth and balsams, that encircled them like a broad gay girdle. And in the middle of the beds, overtopping the raspberry-canes—and they reached right up to the lower branches of the fruit-trees—there stood a few enormous sunflowers, some all by themselves, with nodding heads, like round copper plates, and others in crowded masses of blossoms, looking like bursting fireworks. The hedges, too, of snowball-bushes, alders and wild rose, along the neighbour's boundary, were all richly adorned as with coloured beads, white, black and red.

The air was quite still, yet there was a never-ceasing rustle amongst the dry leaves, and more rarely even the thud of some worm-eaten, early apple falling to the ground. Long white cobwebs stretched this

way and that, and only one belated butterfly was turning and twisting in her bright dress on a blue aster.

From the meadows beyond the crowns of the solitary poplars looked over the hedges, crowns now themselves yellow once more and so sparsely covered with leaves, that they were penetrated and lit up by the soft brightness of the warm, pale-blue autumn sky.

The children, hanging on to Hetty's arms right and left, never budged from her side, but pressed up against her, for they were jealous of one another, and neither wished to have the lesser share of Hetty's favour. And even if they did not talk to her, the conversation being carried on solely and entirely by the new cousin Julius, yet neither was willing to lose touch of Hetty, so that to-day they did not join in a common expedition against the last pears or the first apples, but both walked politely beside her, without giving way an inch. Besides, they had their pockets full, and nibbled and chewed in quiet meditation as they slowly set one foot in front of the other and looked wide-eyed out upon the soft, bright autumn day.

And just as it pleased Hetty—in so far as anything at all either pleased or displeased her now—that the children should stay with her, for she had no wish to be left alone with the new cousin, so it displeased cousin Julius, who now found no opportunity to utter a carefully prepared speech, in which he meant to say how hard it was to bid her good-bye, since he had to go to the frontier to buy stock, and in which he drew such a glowing picture of his own merits, that Hetty would indeed have been foolish not to accept with open hands, when he should finish up by showing in modest yet dignified words that, in spite of all his gifts, or perhaps because of them, he had, from his youth up, never cherished any other desire than to choose his cousin Hetty Geybert for the proud position of his wife, and that he trusted, he might hope, he had made no unfavourable impression upon



her ; and, even though so far she had not reciprocated his tender feelings, yet he was firmly convinced that . . . The new cousin Julius could not manage to deliver this speech, for he had no desire to have Wolfgang and Jenny as witnesses of his eloquence, and they would not budge.

Since, then, he could not bring up his heavy guns, he began with a little light skirmishing, telling her how fond he really was of nature and how poetical the garden was here, with its many roses and other flowers as well, if only he had more time ; but often on his trips—for he had travelled too—he was not like the others, who only went from one business house to another, and spent their leisure in the beershop, but always kept his eyes open and saw the sights of the town—and yet sold twice as much as anyone else. In the same way he was keen on culture . . . he would like to do more in this line, and Hetty must believe that he was a steady man with serious tastes. When he was at school the headmaster, Diamant, had even come to his parents and urged them to send their Julius—with his ability—to the Classical School, but he had said it did not attract him ; the languages were too dead.

That Hetty could well believe, she had no reason to do otherwise, especially as she really only heard the half of what Julius was saying. She was also glad not to be alone with this cousin, for she would not have been a woman if she had not felt what was in store for her, although she might not have a sure and certain clue to all his self-glorification.

But so differently do two people judge the same thing, that what Hetty thought opportune and pleasant seemed most inopportune and unpleasant to the new cousin Julius. And so different is the real nature of things from their appearance, so well can they hide their true aspect, and so little idea have we of our own good, that, really and truly, the cousin should have been glad and Hetty sorry that the children would not leave her side. For Hetty would certainly have

given his answer to cousin Julius then, but as things were . . . well . . .

But then Eli came along the path in his yellow top-boots and his coat with bright buttons, reflecting the sun, not walking slowly, as if for pleasure, or smiling a little as he sauntered past the flower-beds, but with evident signs of haste and anxiety. His head shook till the powder rose in clouds, which were transformed by the autumn sunlight into a halo round his head, as he looked anxiously in every direction.

"Hetty," he cried, "Hetty, have you seen Jason?"

Hetty and her companions turned round.

"Jason? No."

"A long while ago he went out of the summer-house, but he hasn't come back."

"Oh," Hetty answered, "what could happen to him here?" But she called aloud: "Uncle Jason!" in her beautiful, deep, contralto voice, the children echoed her call in their high falsetto, and the new cousin Julius, desirous of making a good impression, shouted too, with all the force of his oily baritone: "Uncle Jason."

But as the echoes died away they were followed by a silence even deeper than before.

Then Hetty, too, felt nervous and ran on, accompanied by the children and Julius, with Eli following up as fast as he could.

Half-way the maid met them as she was taking something to the summer-house.

"Johanna, haven't you seen Herr Jason?"

"Oh yes," answered Johanna, whose weak point was her memory, "Herr Jason has gone. He told me to say he did not wish to disturb the company but he was not very well."

"I don't like that," said Eli. "But anyone can feel upset sometimes," Julius remarked. "A fortnight ago I felt . . ."

"Are you in any way acquainted with my nephew Jason, young man!" Eli replied in no kindly tones. Well then, why do you speak? I know him, and if



he had felt, as it pleased you to feel a fortnight ago, he would have stopped here. I know him. I went to see him that time—here in prison—and he came out as he went in. You just ought to have seen the others, Hetty.”

Then up came the others, the aunts from their garden-seat, Solomon and Ferdinand from the summer-house.

“What is this, then, about Jason?” Rika asked.

“He’s gone home, don’t you hear?” Eli answered.

Solomon and Ferdinand interchanged glances.

“Ferdinand, do you think I should drive in?” Solomon asked anxiously. For even if Jason and Solomon had lately grown a little apart, and were not quite so intimate as before, Solomon did not love his younger brother any the less, and had still the same feeling towards him as twenty years ago, when he used to try to keep him on the right path. He still felt the same fatherly anxiety about him, although the passing years had more or less effaced the difference in age between them.

“No, no,” Solomon, I will drive over directly. But we must start a little earlier. In any case, it turns cold so early now.”

“Perhaps you could take Dr. Stosch straight away with you to see Jason.”

“Yes, I thought I’d do that.”

“That’s men all over,” interrupted Janey, “if there’s the least thing wrong with them. . . . If Jason had been as I was last Wednesday, rest assured he wouldn’t have come. And I wonder if anyone fetched the doctor straight away for me.”

Rika also added that no one troubled if she felt ill. That she could easily say, as nothing was ever wrong with her.

But Jason’s departure had struck a discordant note of secret anxiety and nervousness which affected everyone, and even gave to the children’s eyes, usually only expressive of a fine freedom from care, a look of astonished inquiry.

Old Aunt Minnie shrugged her crooked shoulders with the remark that it was too cool for her in the garden, and that she was going in. Ferdinand half agreed, saying the air was pleasant but the ground a little damp now, whilst Janey stated her conviction that a shawl was necessary if you were to stay any time in the garden. Then half the company went upstairs. Hetty and Julius need not hesitate to stay outside, for the blood ran faster in their veins than in old folks. The children, too, might play a little longer in the garden. With that they parted.

But the children had no wish to play as they hung right and left on Hetty's arms. Jenny looked at the left side, for there she would be nearer the adored heart than where she was. So, as before, they formed a pleasant barrier between Hetty and the new cousin Julius, who at once began the conversation again by assuring Hetty of his sympathy with her Uncle Jason, but yet he hoped he would not be seriously ill, for he hadn't looked like that at all, so Hetty need feel no anxiety about him.

But, as Hetty gave no answer, Cousin Julius himself soon began to hesitate, for even the most fluent eloquence needs a responsive audience. And the four walked somewhat silently, side by side, down the long garden paths, until they once more resumed their former course round the flower-beds. They could almost look straight at the sun, now clear and very low in the sky, for its light was pale and cool, though bright and wonderfully fugitive, resting nowhere and yet making every outline sharp and clear, as though it was cut out by scissors, of every coloured leaf, every flower and every hill against the cold, pale-blue sky. Then a sudden breeze sprang up that made trees and men alike shiver with cold.

Cousin Julius was determined to begin again, and now—no matter whether the children were there or not—collect his forces for the final blow. For why else had he really driven out to Charlottenburg—in the middle of the week, too? Had he not told Solomon



and Aunt Rika that he would speak to Hetty that afternoon? He was really making himself ridiculous. Once more he decided to begin, and had just struck an attitude, cleared his throat and begun, "Dear Hetty—you know——" when, as Fate would have it, the maid stepped out from among the trees and Hetty, being frightened that it was something to do with Uncle Jason, stopped Cousin Julius and went to meet the girl.

"What is it, what is it then, Johanna?" she called out even from a distance.

"Oh," Johanna answered, "will you please come up."

"Why then?" Hetty had such a foreboding of evil that she felt her heart in her mouth.

"Well, to supper," said Johanna, drawling her words as slowly as a fly crawling out of buttermilk; "the ladies and gentlemen want to get off again very early."

Sure enough, when they got upstairs, the table was already laid, and although it was still fairly light, the candles had been lighted in the tall, white candelabra on the cupboard. They gave but a curious red flicker in the yellow light that flooded in from the chestnuts outside and from the sunset sky, suffusing everything—people, faces, forms—in a soft golden shimmer.

"Well, here come our stragglers," Ferdinand exclaimed significantly. "Was it nice down in the garden?"

"Oh yes," Julius said in a somewhat depressed, slow tone.

"Tell me, Julius," Rika asked with ill-concealed eagerness, "tell me, did I ever show you our rooms here?"

Julius understood.

"No, you were always going to, but so far . . ."

"Well," Rika explained, "this is Hetty's room"—pointing across the hall—"and you see . . ."

To judge by the time that Aunt Rika and the new cousin stayed out of the room, the flat should have

had at least twenty-eight rooms, instead of three and a little one adjoining. Or they should have contained quite special treasures and valuables which, however, they evidently did not. Then, too, it might have been thought that the flat was already heated from end to end—overheated, indeed ; for when they came back—Aunt Rika and the new cousin Julius—they both had faces as red as turkey-cocks. But, say what you will, no one puts on the heat in September, and on such a day as this, least of all in Charlottenburg.

Supper proved somewhat quiet and dull, for the uncertainty as to how Jason was overshadowed his brothers and also made Eli and Hetty—who both, in any case, talked very little now and were always absent-minded—made them also quite silent. Even Cousin Julius, under the influence of his partial defeat, did not open his mouth quite so wide as usual ; that is, figuratively speaking, but not literally, certainly not literally. The walk round the flower-borders and Charlottenburg air had evidently made him hungry, and he was like that other wooer of whom the tale goes that he took no trouble but only fish. Yes, that he did. The three wives Rika, Minnie, Janey, and the children Jenny and Wolfgang, were the talkers this evening. The children, especially, treated the worthy, little old lady with her tight curls to such a rare exhibition of childlike mischief that a very little more and Ferdinand would have restored order in his usual way. But, as it was, he only saw to it that the party broke up early.

After all, what was there to keep them here? A strange mood had suddenly fallen upon all the Geyberts, a depression as after some defeat. None of the men spoke, perhaps because Jason was absent, since he had always marshalled the troops and, even as a listener, had lifted the conversation out of insignificance by providing a background, a foil or some gay interpretation. It was remarkable how, in a moment, the insipid chatter rose in its many-headed unrestraint, the Jacobys' provincial gossip about nothing at all,



alternating between triviality and malice and leaving nothing unscathed by its venomous tongue.

Ferdinand suggested going home, and Hetty hastened to her room to see if the carriages had come. Yes, there they were. The first to go was Eli, who this time found his way, in spite of the approaching darkness, quite quickly and surely down the steps. Solomon, too, wanted to go straight back with them; but Rika begged and implored him to stay where he was—what did he want to go back into Berlin for, when Julius could bring word at once to-morrow how Jason was? And Julius assured him he would be back almost before the break of day.

Hetty looked after the departing guests for some time before she went up the steps again, slowly and irresolutely. It was not yet night, but candles were being lit in the houses, and she could see ruddy lights in the distance and along the road. The sky flamed yellow, and long rows of autumnal trees stood out black as charcoal against the sunset. But down the road their autumn-tinted foliage was still covered with a veil of golden light, and low amongst their leaves hung the great moon rising in blood-red splendour.

When Hetty came in she was surprised not to find her uncle and aunt in the dining-room at the back, and she had quite an uncanny feeling as she saw it all deserted with the chairs pushed back, the crumpled dinner-napkins and the half-empty plates and glasses in the bright light of a few smoking candles. For it was really much too early for bed, and Hetty thought, at first, that the two had gone down into the garden again, when the sound of low-voiced whispers in their bedroom so startled her that she swayed and had to steady herself against the back of a chair. Lately, indeed, she had often been startled, but never quite so violently as now.

After some time, although her heart was still beating wildly, she called the maid to clear the table, and was glad to change the current of her thoughts

for a few moments at least by giving a helping hand herself.

But when Hetty was in her own room again—she did not want to light her candle—watching the moon creep up amongst the trees and quickly rise above their tops for her lonely journey across the vaulted heavens, there was nothing more to distract her thoughts. The moon crept very slowly round the corner between the little white, floating clouds that for brief moments shaded her face with the thinnest of filmy veils. At first, no more than a corner of the window and the curtain was lit up by her pale beams, but then she moved on through the sky, looked Hetty full in the face, flooded the whole garden, which had lain so long in silent shade, with her elusive light, cast a long shadow on the floor behind Hetty and filled all the room with a pale radiance in which you could see everything and yet nothing, where every object seemed veiled, white, mysterious.

And Hetty's thoughts rose like village dogs at night. The place lies still and quiet and everything seems wrapped in sleep. Suddenly a dog begins a muffled growl, half-dreaming maybe, or because some little cat is hurrying over the roof or some wanderer tramping along the dark village street. A second dog answers the first, and another and another till all the dogs are awake, barking and striving to outdo each other in the noise of their mutual greetings. And they howl wildly and restlessly far into the dawn, until the cat is long since asleep in the barn and the wanderer is who knows where in the wide world, having quite forgotten that he had passed through some village where a dog began to bark.

Hetty's thoughts were just like this, and she had no idea how long she had been sitting at the window, for her thoughts ran on and on, answering one another, like village dogs at night, long after the wanderer who disturbed them has passed on his way, Heaven knows where. Hetty did not know whether the two in the other room were still talking or what they said ;



not a sound did she hear. But then she felt someone in her room, felt something like a cold breath at the back of her neck, and turned round sharply.

"Hetty, are you still up?" came in slow, firm tones from her aunt; she was in her night attire already, and floated in the moonlight before Hetty, a broad, white figure. "May I sit down here? I wanted to talk to you a little;" and she sat down on the edge of the settee. "Well, how did this afternoon go? Did you have a nice chat together?"

"I am worried about Uncle Jason, Aunt."

"Well, we must hope, Hetty," came the reply; "worrying does no good. All the same, we must be prepared for anything. I tell you my poor brother Nero was quite well one day and five days later dead,—erysipelas it was, and he a giant compared with your uncle. But in my opinion there is nothing wrong with Jason."

Hetty sat quite still without answering.

"Mark my words, you will hear to-morrow he is well again. But now, Hetty, something else. How do you like Julius I want to know?"

Hetty gave no answer.

"Well, of course, I know a young woman cannot exactly say a thing like that. But isn't he really a nice fellow?"

Hetty still kept silence.

"I fancy no one can say a word to the contrary—but he is not only a nice, cultured man, but has sterling worth as well. If you would like, you can read the report that Solomon got of him from his former principal in Posen, I never read anything like it."

"Does Uncle mean to take him into the business?" Hetty inquired.

"Perhaps." Her aunt told the falsehood with the assurance of long practice. "Why not, later on?"

They were both silent again for some time, for Aunt Rika did not really quite know how to begin.

"I wonder, Hetty," she said, "how long now, have you been with us? Twenty-one years, I believe, on

the 14th of next month. A long time ! And it is true you have always been a great pleasure to us ; we could give you just as good a testimonial as Julius had from his Head in Posen."

Hetty slowly nodded, very slowly, as her aunt noticed.

"Wouldn't you like to get away from us, Hetty? I mean, to have a house of your own. Listen, Hetty, I have something to tell you which I hope will please you. Your cousin Julius had a special purpose in coming here to-day. No doubt you will have noticed it, too. For he—oh well, I don't need to explain it all to you—he asked Solomon for your hand."

Hetty had a momentary feeling as though some unseen hand caught her and squeezed her heart.

"I do not need to tell you, dear Hetty, that your Uncle Solomon would like it. You know best what you owe him ; for, after all, he is no longer very young, you see, and he would like to be at last free from all anxiety on your behalf. You know, I don't mean to say you ought to be grateful to us because you have really been made more of than if you had been a child of our own—that is not at all what I mean to say, Hetty ; but what more do you want? He is a nice, well-set-up young man ; or do you wish to dispute that?"

Hetty had no wish to dispute anything—no, nothing at all.

"As to his worth, Solomon will be a better judge than I am, you know. And don't you see, Julius could have someone quite different ; he only needed to say one word and his Posen principal—he was immensely rich—would have at once given him his only child. That was really why he left Posen, because he was always thinking of you, even then."

It is quite true that all this did not require great inventive powers ; nevertheless the calm ease and apparent candour—in which alone the true art of lying consists—shown by Aunt Rika as she told a fairy-tale of which she herself had never dreamt but a



moment before, were matters for surprise, even to those who had known her for years. But Hetty was in no mood now to judge between false and true. She only knew the water was up to her chin and felt too weak and irresolute to fight against it; eight weeks ago perhaps she might have done it, but now she was a swimmer no longer.

Her aunt, however, was too good a judge of character not to have foreseen this, and had purposely waited just because she knew that Hetty would not make any stand against her plans, if only she acted wisely and made no attempt to force her; for that was never any use with these Geyberts.

"Well," said her aunt, getting up, "I see I have surprised you, my child. I don't want to influence you in any way, dear Hetty; in this matter you cannot fail to know exactly what you ought to do; you have always shown yourself so reasonable. I will only say this one thing: You would relieve your uncle—and you do owe him a debt of gratitude, don't you?—you would relieve him of a great anxiety—would, so to speak, fulfil the dearest wish of his heart—but, as I said, I won't influence you, and you are entirely free to do what you wish."

With these parting words the broad, white something in the sickly light sailed with flapping slippers out of the room, drew the door to quietly behind her, and left Hetty alone with her thoughts.

Aunt Rika was in truth no orator, not particularly intellectual or striking; her merits did not lie in that direction—but there was something about her deliberation, something in the persistent, drowsy speech that always came back to her own point of view, that made her opponent bend to her will and almost drove him to despair.

And Hetty, who had faced round to the room during this visit, turned slowly back to the window and looked at the moon, now high in the heavens, small and bright with its cunning laugh. She was no more unhappy than before, no tears fell, but she felt tired

and broken. She had accepted all this much more quietly than she had expected and, indeed, there was something in her innermost heart that was not in opposition, some longing for martyrdom, some childish, defiant determination to take the first-comer, though he might be the worst. There had, indeed, been nothing to call forth her resistance or goad her to defiance ; and, whether her mind was for or against the proposal, she felt alike despairing.

Hetty tried to think it over quietly and come to some clear conclusion, but she could not collect or steady her thoughts ; besides, just now, it was not her own fate that stood first in her mind, but all other considerations were continually overpowered by her anxiety about Uncle Jason.

Once more Hetty felt that someone opened the door, but she stayed quiet and weary as she was, without turning round. The something came gently up to her, quite gently, and then, as she felt someone's hand laid on her shoulder, she knew, without turning, that it was her uncle.

"Hetty," he said, "your aunt has just been talking to you."

"Yes," Hetty answered, still not turning, but keeping her head far thrown back and her eyes fixed on the moon.

"Do you know, Hetty, I don't want to interfere—to-day I have my mind full of other things, my child—but I only want to tell you that you need have no anxiety about the future. You will have just as much comfort and more than you have had here. I will see to that. You have been like our own child, Hetty, and I mean to treat you as such in the future as well. But don't misunderstand me, Hetty, I do not want to influence you, you are old enough to know what you are doing. I only want to tell you that I have no objection, and that I have really only had the very best account of Julius. Then you must not forget, Hetty, that, in a certain sense, you are indebted to your aunt, and she thinks that you two



would suit each other very well, you would give her great pleasure, for lately she has been very worried about you, as, no doubt, you have noticed. It is, so to speak, the dearest wish of her heart, one she has long harboured, and she would be much relieved to see its fulfilment."

Hetty still kept her eyes fixed on the moon, and all she felt during her uncle's speech was that his words had a great similarity with her aunt's; some turns, indeed, were exactly the same, only used in reference to another.

"Just think it over, dear Hetty," her uncle at last concluded. "We have not the slightest desire to urge you, but we feel you must know Julius well enough by now to form your own opinion about him. And now, my child, sleep well, and to-morrow we will talk it over again. We hope Jason's illness is nothing very serious."

So saying, Uncle Solomon stepped up behind Hetty and stroked her cheek with a kind and gentle hand; but as Hetty turned her head he had slipped out of the room without a sound from his felt slippers.

Her uncle's little endearment which, if Hetty had but understood it aright, really contained a touch of pity, broke down her last line of defence, for now it came over Hetty how very good they had been to her after all, how calmly she had accepted everything, and how ungrateful that was of her; then followed the whole chain of self-accusations and reproaches that we always drag out when we are just going to consent to something which we cannot ourselves either justify or approve.

The moon sailed on, casting her slanting rays over the garden and over the quiet dusty road with its border of lime-trees, where now and again came the sound of some distant hoof. Away in the houses the last candle had long since been put out, and the pale moonlight was reflected from the darkened windows. The same pale light made the few oil lamps well-nigh forget their office, and the road lay deserted and

silvery throughout its length—now bright as day, except for the black shadows, and then again bathed in a pale, even twilight, as a veil of clouds on the dark sky passed across the face of the moon.

Hetty was just going to get up, with the sense of weariness that the sight of an empty street at night always produces, when that broad white, overwhelming something with flapping shoes again came in, the something whose voice seemed to give such an unmistakable impression of Aunt Rika.

“Well,” came the anxious inquiry, “are you still not in bed yet, my child?”

No, Hetty was not.

“Come now, your uncle has told you, I know, how much he wishes it, and I know, of old, that you are too sensible to throw away your chances of happiness. And if you think you don’t know Julius yet, I would just like to tell you something—now look at me: do I live happily with Solomon or not? If we ever do differ, he tells me his opinion and I tell him mine, and then it is all over and done with. And how often do you think I saw him before we married? Now, how often, Hetty? Five times—not once more! Ferdinand and Janey now had a courtship of four years. And what has come of it? Best not say a word about that, I think.”

And the white, spreading something made a specially significant pause amongst the many on the chance of getting some kind of answer. But since none came, it again resumed:

“And, Hetty, if you really have taken a fancy to the other, I just want to tell you that he has quite given up thinking of you; for months now he has not been in Berlin. Lord knows where he is now, and who he is running after. I don’t want to say any ill of him, but men are all like that. I’ve had some experience in that line, I can tell you, Hetty. You know I’ve kept a quiet tongue about the business, for I saw you cared for the man, and I didn’t want to upset you—why shouldn’t you?—you are but young



and have a right to enjoy yourself ; but where's the girl that after all marries the man she loves? I needn't hesitate to tell you now, Hetty, that, when I was young, I had a love affair, too, with the son of the organist Reitzenstein at home ; we liked one another, more than liked, and yet afterwards I've been very happy with my Solomon, haven't I, Hetty? "

Even though all that the white, floating something said about Kossling fell on barren ground, for Hetty would listen to no slander of him from strangers, keeping as she did his image hidden where it was safe from untrue words and evil gossip, yet that same broad, white, floating something showed considerable tact in posing as a fellow-sufferer of Hetty's, and the worthy aunt gave evidence of a deep sense of justice, in presenting the old precentor Reitzenstein with a posthumous son whom he—richly blessed with daughters—had all his life ardently and vainly longed to welcome.

" Well, good-bye, Hetty ; now I'm off to bed," came from the settee through the twilight of the room after a long silence, only broken by the ticking of a clock in the next room. And I hope I shall have a favourable answer to give Julius to-morrow, poor lad. For nights he hasn't had any sleep ; his face told that plain enough to-day."

Hetty had got up ; how limp she felt, tired to death and pitifully worn-out with all the talking, the thinking, her self-reproaches and the anxiety about Jason. She really did not want to give any answer at all ; they must give her until to-morrow, only till to-morrow, when everything might be different, when who could tell what might have happened. But then again, as Hetty said to herself, after all there would be no point in delay ; she would be persecuted just the same to-morrow, driven into the same corner as to-day, so that it had better be now than then. But she could neither reason nor argue any more, she had finished with pros and cons, and only felt that she must put an end to the present state of affairs.

"If you two think it best," she said in an utterly broken tone.

"Solomon!" her aunt cried in a loud, shrill voice as she pattered across the room and threw her arms round Hetty, who stood there stiff, straight and almost motionless. "Solomon!"

"What is it?" questioned Solomon from the next room.

But then Uncle Solomon had joined them, he too in white, floating draperies, but not so broad as Aunt Rika.

"Well now"—his voice showed his emotion—"Hetty, do you know, you really have given me pleasure." He kissed her and Aunt Rika kissed him as she laughed and talked and repeated time and again that, of course, she had known it all along, but Hetty wouldn't own to it.

And Uncle Solomon kissed Hetty again and told her he would look after her. And he added that his wife must be quiet, or she would wake everyone in the house; from his heart he wished Hetty all happiness, and was doubly glad because she was now fulfilling the wish her aunt had harboured for years. But they could talk it all over the next day, and now they must go to bed; Hetty, too, was very tired. So Aunt Rika kissed Hetty, and her uncle kissed Hetty, and Aunt Rika kissed Uncle Solomon, and Uncle Solomon kissed Aunt Rika, whilst Hetty stood between them, almost dropping with fatigue.

Her aunt was beginning again a tale of something Julius always used to say, as a child, when Uncle Solomon begged her to come and really stop talking, so that poor Hetty might get some rest.

And long after, as Hetty lay weeping, sobbing and pushing her feet against the end of her bed in the half-dark room, she could still hear her uncle calling to Aunt Rika to come, and asking whatever she was about in the parlour.

But Aunt Rika replied she had almost finished the list, and did Solomon think she ought to send



a notification to the Bentheims? But all Solomon answered was, that could be decided the next day, and would she come along, in Heaven's name, and get to bed?

\* \* \* \* \*

And everything came, as come it must, everything as it must. Just as the garden outside flared up once more and the oak-trees glowed in wondrous golden tints, as the wild vine, like finely cut blood-stones, covered walls and arbour alike, as brilliant carmine, ruddy brown and pale, pale yellow enwreathed the trunks and branches of elms, chestnuts and poplars before the colours all fell in great masses to the ground, hiding paths and grass under their gay mantle, before the rain came at last to put a final end to summer, splashing and beating again and again on the last few brown and yellow leaves and—deaf to their prayers and entreaties—dashed them down from the boughs and tossed them into some forgotten corner of road or garden—just so did Fate deal with Hetty. First the flare of glowing colour, gold carmine, crimson as blood-stones, then the breaking-off ; later the pouring rain, splashing and tearing the last leaves till they, too, were broken off from the boughs and tossed away into some unheeded corner.

Everything came, as come it must, . . . everything as it must. Scarcely had the day dawned, when the new cousin Julius was there once more, Julius, who—like some cherry-tree that, all unsuspecting, is decked one night with blossom—had in that one night blossomed into a happy lover. Hetty, pale and stiff as a statue, met him with but the one question on her lips as to what news he brought of Jason ; but his aunt kissed Julius and told him how very glad she was, since they were so well suited to each other. Even Julius seemed somewhat confused, though happy, as he told Hetty he did not expect her to feel at once quite as he did—a remark that inwardly amused Hetty, for no one of taste can ever be quite so unhappy as

to lose all sense of the humour of a situation. But, he went on, he flattered himself with the hope of being able to gain her affection, and although they could not see much of each other at present, since he must make haste to go and buy if he didn't mean to lose all the season, still they would soon have an opportunity of getting on terms of intimacy.

Then, however, Uncle Solomon came in and congratulated Julius, somewhat formally and with a coolness and want of pleasure in marked contrast with the night before, and asked how his brother was. When he heard the by no means favourable answer, that Jason was now delirious and that the doctor had said he must wait till to-day, but he was almost sure it was typhus, Solomon went, without a word, into his room, and reappearing at once all ready booted and spurred, inquired if Julius meant to come with him, as he was driving in now. Julius, who had possibly pictured his first visit as accepted lover not quite like this, hesitated for a moment; but Aunt Rika winked significantly, and Julius exclaimed, of course he meant to come—he was at his service all day if he could be of the slightest use.

So before they knew where they were, and before they had got over the first shock of Jason's illness, the two women were once more alone.

Hetty was anxious to go at once to Jason, but her aunt begged and entreated. What could she be thinking of? A young woman who was going to be married must never go near anyone ill—such a thing was out of the question; and if she did, be sure she would one day rue it bitterly.

Before long Aunt Janey came in from Berlin laughing, chattering and jabbering; then she fell on Hetty's neck, and between her tears wished her all good fortune, and might her married life be happier than hers had been; but that Hetty would be well off with Julius was beyond doubt, such a splendid fellow as he was!

The news of Hetty's engagement soon spread through



the house, and Frau Konnecke came up to congratulate. It was, she said, after all, high time for Hetty. And when Hetty went out into the kitchen, there was the maid standing, with swollen, tearful eyes, to shake her hand—men have no fellow-feeling, but the same common lot makes all women sisters. As Hetty looked at her, she began to cry again, and before either of them knew what she was doing, the two—Hetty and Johanna—were standing, cheek by cheek, sobbing together. So strange it is, we always think no one knows what we are hiding in our hearts and the burden that we alone have to bear, yet, all the time, we have been open books where others may read all they have a wish to know.

And everything came, as come it must. The post brought whole stacks of letters to Charlottenburg, and acquaintances came every midday to bring their congratulations. Aunt Rika sat in her black silk on the sofa with her ready laugh and amiable fabrications, her dignity and breadth increasing in direct proportion with the importance of her visitors.

And cabs brought Hetty's maternal relatives that she had not seen for years and years ; tall, very quiet people, kind and friendly. The very next day came Uncle Eli, who kissed Hetty and remarked to Aunt Rika : " Well, Rika, you know, I always put off my congratulations in things of this sort until ten years after the event." Then there were letters from Julius's sisters in Benshen, and from Uncle Naphthali, the oldest representative of all the Jacobys. But they gave no betrothal party, for Uncle Solomon was against one whilst Jason was so ill ; and before they could really collect their ideas the happy lover was off to buy his stock in Posen and Upper Silesia. They would have, otherwise, had to copy that silver wedding which the old wife celebrated by herself as her husband had died full six years before. And even if this was permissible once in a way for a silver wedding, it would certainly have been conspicuously out of place for a betrothal ceremonial.

It must not be imagined, however, that Hetty passed her days weeping and sitting about with a long face—her life went on as calmly as ever. For Hetty's natural disposition was to look on the bright side, and if she could not have happiness, she put up instead with the glitter of luxury and comfort which is accepted by most people as the real substance.

But, whilst things went on fairly quietly in Charlottenburg, this engagement was a never-ending subject of discussion in Berlin, where no one understood how this clever, beautiful girl could throw herself away like that; the man was nothing at all, nor had he any prospects; and how could Solomon Geybert sanction it? There were some even who plainly said so to his face; others, again, whispered that there was some tale behind it all, and that she was only taking this one out of pique, because she could not get the one she wanted. Such things did happen. And evil tongues made up all sorts of untrue reports and said, no doubt, Solomon Geybert had been obliged to find Hetty a husband, and everyone knew money would hide anything. Of course he couldn't get anyone else here in Berlin, so he had hastily fetched over a nephew from Posen for her. Just wait, and events would prove that they were right.

Everything came, as come it must. Uncle Jason really had typhus, and was hopelessly ill from the very first—the delirium scarcely left him from that day, and Hetty lived in hourly anxiety. Whenever she saw Uncle Solomon, her first words were always: "What does Stosch say?" She drove in by herself, too, for Solomon spent almost every spare moment day and night with his brother, and came out very seldom to Charlottenburg; but to Jason himself she was not allowed to go. Even Uncle Solomon said a young woman, engaged to be married, must not do such a thing, and he was not superstitious at all as a rule. But if her uncle had told Hetty the truth, that was not the reason at all, but rather that Hetty and Kossling were the chief people in Jason's delirious



raving ; sometimes, indeed, for hours together he thought his male attendant was Kossling, and addressed his old housekeeper as Hetty.

When things had reached such a pitch with Jason that the old housekeeper, Hortel by name, in the wonderful flowered gown, said that she would like some of the furniture if she might have it, and had received Ferdinand's assurance that she should be remembered ; when old Stosch took Ferdinand aside one afternoon to tell him of his intention to stay there the rest of the day, as he did not think Jason would live through the night, and thereafter did not leave his patient's bedside ; when Solomon, Ferdinand and Eli sat shivering and silent opposite one another in Jason's library listening till midnight as the sound of the chimes every quarter of an hour floated in through the half-open window—then Jason, who, all his life long, had never once done what was expected of him, once again disappointed their expectations. First of all his temperature fell, and he startled them all as they sat there by the sound of his calm, clear voice. “ Isn't it often like that, just before the end ? ” Ferdinand asked the doctor.

But the taciturn old man, as well known for his rough tongue as for his skill, only shrugged his shoulders : “ Your brother will live longer than you with your gall-stones, dear Herr Geybert. I have told the attendant to give another bath if necessary, but it won't be ; his pulse is so far very strong and good. You can come away with me now, gentlemen.”

And the three men did what men seldom do—wept and embraced one another ; Ferdinand was for rushing in at once to see Jason, but Stosch railed at him, whilst Eli declared he had never believed all along that Jason was so ill, and had never been anxious about him, quite ignoring the fact that this remark was a direct contradiction of his statements only two minutes before.

But even the joy of knowing Jason was out of danger did not make Hetty much more gay or less

apathetic, and Solomon now began to reproach himself and once more to discuss the matter with Ferdinand.

"Do you know, Ferdinand," Solomon at first tentatively broached the subject, "it strikes me that Hetty really looks very ill."

"Well, have you ever known a bride-to-be that looked well?" answered Ferdinand, who always chose to show a rough-and-ready optimism with regard to his neighbour's mental state.

"Well," said Solomon, "that may be so, but it strikes me that Hetty doesn't care for him in the least, for my wife always has to remind her to write to him."

"So much the better," Ferdinand replied, with that unconquerable optimism of his. "I tell you, Solomon, those make afterwards the most affectionate wives. And that always makes the happiest marriages. I'm an old hand in all this!"

But Solomon was not quite convinced. "And then," so he went on, "I have since heard a few things about Julius—you see, there is always more said after than before—really very unpleasant things that don't, in the least, please me, both as regards his business and—well, in another respect as well."

And Solomon told his tale.

But Ferdinand could see no harm in it; quite the contrary. And, as regarded the other matter, surely Solomon was forgetting that, at the same age, they hadn't been much better, and wasn't it wiser to sow your wild oats before than after? In Ferdinand's opinion to know all was to forgive all, a statement that came well from him, as there was nothing he did not know.

Solomon, however, was still not quite convinced, nor were his doubts in the least relieved, for he had, in addition, a hidden cause for dissatisfaction, which he did not mention to his brother. For, now that he had read the letters sent to Hetty and his wife by Julius's relations, his sisters, cousins, uncles and aunts,



he was forced to agree with old Eli's verdict that the family wasn't much to boast of. His Geybert pride was sorely wounded, and Solomon could not understand how he had ever been persuaded to consent to this union. Besides, he loved Hetty far too dearly not to grudge her to such as Julius. Day and night Uncle Eli's plain-spoken saying about a silken patch on a rag-sack rang in his ears. He would not take the first step in the matter—for he had not been head of a great business house for thirty years without forgetting how to own to having made a mistake—but he waited and waited from day to day, in the hope that Hetty would come sometime and say: "Uncle, I will not do it." Solomon would have been more than delighted to write the letter of dismissal for her with his own hand.

But Hetty never breathed such a word, nor did she give the slightest indication to lead Solomon to conclude that this union was distasteful to her. No, Hetty was just as tractable and amiable as ever, never complaining by a look even, much less by word. For, by now, she had grown so accustomed to the martyrdom which she considered but a debt of gratitude, that she almost loved it, and would have been sorry to lose it.

Now, whilst the new cousin Julius was travelling in Posen and Upper Silesia from place to place, living in impossible little holes with even more impossible names, to make advantageous purchases of quantities of raw and tanned Russian hides which had doubtless seen the frontier, but never a custom-house; whilst he wrote to Hetty regularly every two days: "I take up my pen with pleasure to let you know that I received your welcome letter. I learn from it that you are well, and can assure you that the same is true of me. My little dove, as soon as you are mine, I will entwine wreaths of roses round your life"—whilst this went on, Hetty lived a calm, untroubled life at Charlottenburg. For Hetty was naturally disposed to look on the bright side of everything, and

if she could not have happiness itself, she would content herself with that glimmer of comfort that we all agree to accept instead. And since it was her one aim not to think of the future—her nights were bad enough without anything more—she clung to the short happiness of the present, out there in Charlottenburg with its quiet, its garden, still beautiful even in autumn, its long walks in the great park that she loved once more for its memories.

And her aunt, who once could not have gone soon enough into Berlin again, now said it was, after all, too beautiful here, she couldn't bear to leave it, and would like to stay as long as a single leaf was left on the trees, for it was, just now, at its best. Nor was it really the fear of typhus that made her talk like that—for there was no word of any fresh cases—but rather fear of "the other one." For "the other one" had reappeared in Berlin. Her sister Janey had seen him herself, and report said that he had been at Jason's again, whilst Ferdinand said that he was working at the library—it was on this account that Hetty must be kept out at Charlottenburg as long as it was in any way possible.

So that although, at first, the wedding-day had not been once mentioned, now it was suddenly settled that Hetty should marry in the end of November, when Julius came back from his travels. Aunt Rika had already fixed her eye on a flat for the young couple, four nice rooms in New Friedrich Street, up by the river, quite close to "The Friendly Gathering."

And that Cousin Julius was somewhat long over his purchases of those raw and tanned hides, that had doubtless seen the frontier but never a custom-house in impossible holes in Posen and Upper Silesia—that he was a little slow was certainly Aunt Rika's fault. For she was far too clever not to put the right interpretation on Uncle Solomon's depression which, besides, could have no other cause, since Jason was long since out of danger. And she quite rightly said to herself



that the longer Julius stayed away the less chance of friction between him and her husband, and she had no doubt of her own power to keep his memory green with Hetty. That Solomon should raise any objections whatever, once the furniture was begun and the trousseau cut out, seemed out of the question in worthy Aunt Rika's opinion, for, in the course of their happy married life, she had become too well acquainted with her lord and master's practical mind to believe in the possibility of such a thing.

So, in order not to give her Solomon too much time to change his mind, Aunt Rika began her orders and purchases, and set tailors and carpenters to work as if she had to provide for not one bride only, but for quite a dozen.

Aunt Rika showed Hetty the flat in New Friedrich Street, not far from "The Friendly Gathering," and then sent Julius the tenant's agreement to sign, with the remark that she had hunted about everywhere now, but had not seen a better flat, or one with so many advantages in all Berlin. Hetty let her aunt do as she liked; all she wanted was not to be troubled with it.

Aunt Rika went about the furniture to the cabinet-maker Lowenberg because, after all, they knew him, and because he certainly would never come to Solomon's whist party again, if they forgot him in this matter. For the parlour and dining-room, and even the spare room, Aunt Rika chose everything in polished mahogany, and to suit the parlour that was to be stained a very dark reddish-brown, she went herself to the warehouse to choose the dark-blue, heavy satin for the covers. And every two or three days Aunt Rika drove in to see, with her own little, black jet eyes, how the work was getting on, and if it would be ready in good time. Uncle Solomon thought it touching of his wife to sacrifice herself like this for Hetty. She was wearing herself to a thread-paper, he said, and losing all her fat.

And as Aunt Rika really was anxious to hurry on

the wedding, she did not get dressmakers to work in the house, but taking the latest numbers of Kossmann's *Journal des Modes*, that always showed the newest Paris fashions, she went to the ladies' tailor, Dunsing, and to Mahn as well, had Hetty measured, and then lavished orders to delight any tailor's heart: morning wrappers—white, lavender, pink for spring, summer, autumn, winter, gowns for everyday wear and for any special occasions that might occur, and for which provision must be made by a young married woman. It was always essential to have a good supply of morning gowns, and Aunt Rika ordered walking costumes in green English cloth with three long rows of buttons down bodice and skirt, and visiting dresses of black and coloured silk, silver-grey too, and some of very delicate pastel shades, with which Hetty was to wear a red Turkey shawl. And there were endless disputes—for Hetty now had three mothers: Rika, Janey and Minnie—lasting for hours and culminating in personalities—as to whether the belt should have long ends or not, and whether the lilac silk dress should be trimmed with stiff pleating or light flounces. And Minnie was annoyed that Dunsing had cut a skirt of striped grey and white material on the cross, and that the red cape was to have a fur rather than a velvet collar. She had never seen a wrap of that sort with fur on it before. And the dark cloth dress ought not to have leg-of-mutton sleeves, for a dress like that would last for ten years, and who knew if those sleeves would still be worn ten years later? She had never gone in herself for such foolish fashions. But then Janey remarked that to wear leg-of-mutton sleeves you must have a figure like hers or Hetty's, and Minnie replied she had never yet seen a pug dog with leg-of-mutton sleeves; in short, they had a fierce quarrel, and would probably never have made it up if this subject had not been so teeming with interest. But since the two, when it came to the question of whether the wedding-dress should be white corded silk or white silk damask, both maintained



white damask in opposition to Aunt Rika's opinion, this common bond healed the breach.

And the only unsympathetic onlooker in these matters was just the one whom they most nearly concerned. In days gone by it had given Hetty pleasure to be able to have pretty dresses, and she had upheld her own taste in long wordy battles with her aunt ; now it was a matter of no importance to her ; nay, more, it was such a trial that it was almost impossible to get her to go and be fitted, just as difficult as to get her to express any wishes about the furniture.

But Aunt Rika was very different. From the cabinet-maker Lowenstein she went to Dunsing, and from Dunsing to Mahn, although neither must know that the other was working for her. And when she had talked herself hoarse over a hundred alterations and overwhelmed the forewoman with abuse that would not have been overlooked in any but such a good customer, then on she went, without a pause, to Wolfenstein.

She had to buy there, too, since such things as friendship and ties of blood must be considered, and Aunt Rika ordered and purchased, as if she had to equip an hotel and not a simple household. Hetty was given so many damask tablecloths for thirty-six persons that she could have had table d'hôte every day and then would only have needed to wash but once in two months. " Well, there's no harm in one too many, and Hetty's children's children are to enjoy them too." And at the milliner's Hetty had to try on the whole shopful of hats and hoods until her brain was in a whirl.

But if that was only the public side of Aunt Rika's work for Hetty, there was a private side of scarcely less importance. Jenny was to make a counter-box in beadwork and a crockery basket, but, besides these, Janey meant to work a bell-pull. Uncle Solomon must give for his own present a grand piano as a special surprise, and the little lady with tight curls was busy making three cushions of different sizes. Uncle

Naphthali from Benshen was to give a double-armed lamp, and Eli a plate-stand of silver and ruby glass. But he said that was too small and insignificant a present for Hetty, and on his own responsibility he added a dessert bowl of crystal on a silver stand, whilst Ferdinand protested that the carpets that Aunt Janey had found for him to give were too dear—he couldn't afford that ; he had three children. And finally, Jason must give a pair of heavy silver candlesticks which Rika would get for him. For Jason was still not able to get out, and only left his bed for a few hours to sit in front of his china or turn over his prints, for he was not allowed to read yet. And then, too—before it was forgotten—Flossie and Rosalie must join in a set of water-jugs and tumblers, unless they preferred to embroider two cushions in blue roses for the window seats in the best room, but that would certainly cost just as much and be such an immense amount of work that they would scarcely be able to get it done in time.

Hetty would only too gladly have gone to see Uncle Jason. But as soon as she suggested it her aunt raised a terrible to-do, and even her uncle, if he chanced to be there—for it was the height of the season in the business and he had not much time or thought for other things—even her uncle said no bride-to-be must do such a thing. And although Hetty suggested that Jason was no longer ill at all, she was talked down.

And then the battle began : who should be invited ? The three wives, Janey, Minnie and Rika, all drew up lists, and each fought for her candidates like a lioness for her cubs. The first proposal was for a wedding-feast of the greatest parade and all the world and his wife as guests, but then they thought that this was not in the best taste, nor was it quite suitable, as Hetty was an orphan. So then sixty names were left, and these, after another council of war, were sifted down to five-and-twenty—who knows—if it had not been high time to send out the invitations—if they



might not later have been reduced to three and no bridegroom included? Aunt Rika hoped, however, that ten at least would refuse. She reckoned without any doubts on certain refusals, and really thought it a pity to scatter broadcast these beautiful invitations where in copper plate on satin paper Solomon Geybert and his wife in grand style did themselves the honour to . . .

Even Solomon himself, who so far had given a silent assent to all arrangements, was drawn into the hostilities of these days—and the only one who made no objections and expressed no desires was once more Hetty. All that worried her was that this quiet time out here in Charlottenburg was drawing to an end.

For two weeks now Julius had been writing tender letters from Mogilno, until at last Aunt Rika thought that the cabinet work was sufficiently advanced to allow him to come in all confidence to Berlin. She also said she wanted to move back there herself, for she had had enough of this Charlottenburg.

Once more Hetty went into the park to bid farewell to all her memories. It was a dreary, wet day, when the whole sky was in movement and came to meet her with scudding clouds, that, here, hung low like heavy bales and, there, were swept away like light gauze handkerchiefs. The clouds, as they moved on, were so low that they almost touched the bare tree-tops, and for moments at a time all was grey and misty, wrapt in a dreamy quiet. But then the wind came, bending before it the groaning poplars as though they were but ferns, and the rain began pouring down in broad sheets, washing boughs and trunks from tip to root, rubbing down every little twig and swilling it with its cold floods until it shuddered in fear. Only some lilac-hedges and a few plane-trees kept their green leaves through all this misery, and even they seemed to look forward with deepest longing to the first frosty day to bring sleep to them as well. Everywhere you could look through the bushes and see far into the distance, as on the first days of spring.

The roads looked as if they had been scrubbed, and the pond's black water was entirely covered by a floating crust of withered leaves blown on to it from paths and lawn.

Hetty scarcely met a soul, only away below the yellow figure a sentry on guard, with his gun in his arm, marched up and down in front of the yellow building, and somewhere else old women were gathering basketfuls of fallen wood. The beauty spots!—these she scarcely recognized. What had been shut in and cosy was now all empty and exposed. Here they had sat by the little bell that at other times had always suddenly appeared like some unexpected vision, but now Hetty had seen it from afar. At other times Hetty had always thought of the little golden house behind the dark yews—which they had not rented after all—as quite a hidden corner of the world, seldom to be discovered and found, and that only in hours of happiness, but now it seemed, with its black up-standing trees, like a fortress dominating the landscape far and wide.

And with bent head and wind-tossed skirts Hetty stepped up to this fortress, and as she walked her memories, which at other times were already so curiously changed and veiled, overwhelmed her with such force and distinctness that her tears rolled down her cheeks, mingling with the raindrops that the wind dashed on to her face.

Hetty had come to say farewell, for she had indeed, at this time, preached reason to herself thousands of times, told herself how kind her uncle's and aunt's intentions were—had tried, too, to like the idea of a home of her own; there had even been days when she felt something like respect for Julius, who was driving about in wild places on a desolate cold high road, whilst she sat, idle and indifferent, in her comfortable nest. No doubt he would show many good and attractive qualities when only she got to know him better—no one wins the praise of his fellow-men for nothing. And Hetty had, in fact, only come here once



more to bid her dream farewell. But, instead of that, the truth she disclaimed threw in her teeth that all else was a dream and less than nothing, whilst her real life lay here, so that Hetty suddenly had the strange sensation that hers was no farewell to-day, but a first greeting from afar. Everything came back : they were walking again, one behind the other, along the narrow meadow path under the overhanging branches, standing by the little temple that lay with its wreath and its figures, all golden-red in the evening sunshine, and away by the water between the poplars' bare stems she felt, through the raindrops and the tears on her wet face, those kisses of old for which she had since longed a hundred times.

Then Hetty heard the clear, shrill notes of a clock striking through the bare park, and started, for she had stayed an hour after dinner-time. But when she got home her aunt had driven into town again.

On the following day they went home.

For two weeks more Hetty still slept in the old, bright room of her girlhood's days, and looked out at the back from her balcony into the branches of the walnut-tree, now bare, except for the very few quivering green leaves and equally few heavy, green, half-black walnuts still hanging on the boughs. This year she had not once seen it properly in its full glory ; after the open country at Charlottenburg the cramped space in the town seemed doubly oppressive, and the noise of the city, which she had never noticed before, was now a positive pain to her.

Good heavens, what a whirl and confusion at the Geyberts ! Dunsing and Mahn brought their goods and Wolfenstein as well ; in the front room with the three windows there dangled from each arm of the chandelier a different morning wrapper and a different dress lay on each easy chair, whilst every table was loaded with stacks of white linen. Even the clocks in their glass shades on the tall stands were quite embedded in piles of linen, and the tall table candle-sticks were converted into stands for hats and for

boudoir caps of black and white lace and embroidery. The floor, too, was covered with whole rows of boots and shoes, from dainty bronze footgear with bows and buckles down to plain leather slippers for morning wear.

“Hetty really couldn’t say it was a Cinderella outfit,” Aunt Rika said, a remark she repeated to everyone who came and was brought in to admire, from the porter and washerwoman up to their grand friends the Liebmanns and Mendelssohns.

Hetty scarcely ever had a glimpse of her uncle, for, as the season was at its height, they often were busy in the office until late at night, and the only time she had a few minutes’ talk with him was when she took down the plates of rolls for him and the staff. At dinner he was always tired and silent.

The acceptances and refusals began to arrive, and just those who they hoped would certainly decline accepted, and those whose acceptance was especially desired declined the invitation. And those who had not been invited were offended: “Surely they ought to have included us”; whilst those who were invited said: “We cannot understand how they ever thought of asking us; we are not the least on such intimate terms with the Geyberts.” Even Jason sent a note to say he could not say for certain he would come, as he still felt very weak. But Solomon maintained that Jason would certainly not miss Hetty’s wedding, when he had always been her guide, a second father indeed.

Then Julius came, with a face like copper, sun-burnt and full of his business successes. He went with Hetty to the court in the Jews’ Street to notify the marriage and to take the necessary papers, and went by himself to the court in the same street to have his business registered. *His* business—for at the last moment he had quarrelled with his future partner. Now Julius really no longer saw why someone else should help himself out of his dish. And there were disputes at once about the wedding-breakfast, for Julius said it must be orthodox on account of Uncle



Naphthali, whom he had no wish to offend. Surely he had a right to a voice in the matter, seeing that, after all, it was his wedding. But Aunt Rika pointed out to him that speech is silvern and silence golden, especially here, and that she knew her husband better and therefore could only advise Julius to say "yes" to everything, and afterwards she would arrange for all who wanted orthodox food to get it. And if it still wasn't orthodox enough for them she would have it cooked by the chief rabbi himself. Only for goodness' sake Julius must say he approved of everything.

Next, there came from Benshen—a few days too soon, because they wanted to see Berlin—Flossie and Rosalie, countrified girls, plain and old-fashioned, full of noisy good-humour, not entirely free from a suggestion of cunning calculation as well; they stuck to Hetty like burs, and tried on all her dresses, new and old—although they were much too large for them—just to get the patterns. And Julius showed them Berlin, even going in the day with them to the Opera House, where he tipped the custodian to let them see the great candelabra, for there was nothing like it, even in Posen.

Then, only three days before the wedding, came Uncle Naphthali, about whom Julius, Rosalie and Flossie had woven a tissue of fables. He was a little old man in a brown cloth coat and a rough top-hat, bent and bowed with small bright, suspicious, black eyes in a face that was nothing but wrinkles and always on the move. He might be the same age as Uncle Eli perhaps, but sometimes he would say at random he wasn't seventy-five yet, and at others that he was past eighty. This Uncle Naphthali said with no wish to deceive, nor because—like many old people—his ideas were confused where numbers were concerned, but simply because he had no more accurate knowledge of the matter. And he might be just as near the truth with seventy-five as with eighty. How old he really was only his mother, Bessie, could decide, and for some considerable time now she had

been beyond the reach of cross-examination. But so much was certain : Bessie had married about 1760, so it might well be presumed that the older brother, Joel, was born in 1761, and that the second first saw the light in 1762. And Naphthali was this second son. But others in the place said that there had been a sister in between, and then, too, the worthy Bessie's regularity had left something to be desired, whilst Naphthali, out and out, repudiated his poor deceased little sister and staked his reputation on his mother's regularity. He knew exactly when his birthday was, for his lame Aunt Nannie had always given him a boiled egg for breakfast on the fifth day before the New Year : only in what year this birthday first came . . . there was the rub !

In the evening Naphthali was with them, of course, as was but fitting ; small and black he sat in the chimney-corner buzzing away like a winter fly. Hetty was there as well as Julius and his plain, old-fashioned sisters, who had done their hair like Hetty's since the day before. Uncle Solomon was still at business, but he meant to come up, and the meal was being kept back for him.

Naphthali had looked at everything without a word, at Hetty and the trousseau, the house here and the business premises below, had asked Julius what it was like as a rule, and now he had been sitting for some time, quite contented, in the chimney corner, buzzing away like a winter fly.

" Well, Joel," he said at last. " Well ! Now you have won the first prize in the Prussian lottery after all—just as you always wanted to when you were a boy."

For Naphthali always spoke of Julius as Joel, and here, alas, I must confess that his name was not in the least Julius Jacoby but, in very truth, plain Joel Jacoby. Not a creature had ever called him anything else in Benshen, but even in Posen Joel had struck him as too out of date, and he changed it to Julius. Naphthali, however, was not up to date, and so he



calmly called him Joel, after as before ; not even with a different accent from the one he used to give the name in Benshen. And really, if we give the question our careful consideration, Joel was certainly more appropriate than Julius, for he had very little similarity with the Pope, painted by Raphael, certainly less than with the minor prophet Joel, the son of Pethuel.

Afterwards Solomon came up and they began supper. Julius told about his purchases, the first consignments of which were already to hand and for which he had sent drafts at three months' sight.

Solomon sat without a word, but his face showed his disapproval. He never paid with drafts at three months' sight, and he did not care for purchasers who managed like that, for they had to pay so much by way of compensation that there was no chance of profits. But Solomon forgot that smuggled leather was certainly cheap.

"Well," inquired Naphthali, "how are you going to manage the wedding, Rika?"

"Here in 'The Friendly Gathering,' silly," Naphthali remarked ; "that's on the invitations. I mean—what will there be to eat?"

Solomon fidgeted uneasily on his chair.

Rika gave an embarrassed laugh. "Now, why do you want to know that already, Uncle?"

"Well, I thought we should get the pleasure twice."

"Listen then: first bouillon in cups."

Naphthali buzzed: "Ah, yes . . . broth," he remarked.

"Then second, directly after, trout."

"What's that—trout?"

"They're very delicate fish, Uncle, about this size."

"Why do you give such a little fish? Perhaps you can tell me that. If you'll take my advice, you'll give them a decent-sized salmon, so that the people will have something to fill their stomachs with."

Solomon had jumped to his feet. "Heaven protect us from small towns!" he growled. But Rika cast

a glance at him that told him plainly enough to let the old man enjoy himself for once.

Naphthali only looked up in surprise: "What's wrong with him?"

"I must go down to the business again, Herr Jacoby," Solomon explained. "Excuse me."

As he reached the door Solomon turned round again. "One thing more, before I forget, Hetty. I was at Jason's this afternoon to speak to him again, and he told me he still *does* not feel well enough to come; you go yourself and ask him, even if it's only for an hour. You would miss him on your wedding-day—wouldn't you?"

Hetty felt a curious sense of fear—a nervous terror, as if she would be doing something wrong in going. And she trembled whilst her eyes filled with tears.

"Yes," Julius interposed, "then we will certainly go to Uncle Jason, first thing in the morning."

"I think it will be better for Hetty to go by herself," Rika exclaimed quickly in her anxiety to avoid a scene at all costs, for she saw Solomon was furious.

"In my opinion it will most assuredly be better," Solomon remarked as he went out of the door.

"I don't think that's right," came from Julius after a long pause. "Of course a man may have business worries—who hasn't?—but he has no right to show it at home—'my house is my castle,' as the English say."

Almost all night Hetty lay in wakeful excitement, and if she did get a few minutes' sleep she always dreamt of enormous, many-footed red spiders, who let themselves down very slowly by their crawling legs from the bed canopy and made a wild jump on to her chest, so that she started up in horror to stare into the dark room. Then at last Hetty saw in the slow breaking of a grey dismal day that at first everything was misty and indistinct, and only the gold-fish bowl and a couple of little white figures in the cabinet caught a few rays of light, but then one thing after another appeared—table, chair, wardrobe, the



white pots figured with gold by the window, and the little openwork gilt basket on the small corner cupboard—all awoke with a rustle to life again and stretched themselves in the first grey light of the dull day, whilst the low clouds scurried, in unbroken lines, across the little piece of sky that Hetty could see high up outside the window.

Hetty passed the interval until dinner-time in strange excitement. She did not really hear a word of what was said to her. The linen was being taken under her aunt's watchful eye to her new home, and every half-hour Aunt Rika returned to superintend a fresh transport; Jenny came with red silk linen ties on which she had worked numbers and monograms; the furniture, too, or part of it at any rate, was to be delivered to-day. Julius had to go to the officials again about his business and wanted to put it off until he could walk so far with Hetty. In the afternoon he meant to look up customers, and was firmly convinced that he could undercut all competitors, as the result of his cheap purchases. And then he had quality—what quality! He took a couple of pieces out of his breast-pocket for Hetty to feel the leather, which almost made her faint with its strong smell of tan and hide.

Hetty would have liked to tell her uncle, who had again gone very early to business—it almost looked as though he wanted to get away from the sight of all that was going on—she would have liked to tell him that she did not want to go to Jason; that it gave her pain to see him again, or she would have made up another excuse that she had too much to do: settling in or some such tale. But then she felt ashamed of her nervous fear and said to herself she ought really to be glad to get the chance of going to Jason at last; that she had wanted to see him all the time; she wondered how he would look after his illness, and whether he was expecting her every day. She meant to tell him that nothing must change between them; that he must still be her guide and

friend, after as before, or else she would never be able to bear all this. She hoped she would be able to explain to Uncle Jason, calmly and without resentment, how everything had come to pass, and why she had thought she must do this. But the more she tried to reason with herself the more plainly she felt that undefined, inexplicable dark fear that really had nothing to do with the whole matter, and was quite independent of it.

When, at last, Hetty was on the steps she had to force herself not to turn back again ; if Julius had not been with her she would certainly have gone to her uncle in his office and told him that she would rather write to Jason, but as it was, she passed the little glass door with its bright colour panes, although iron claws seemed to be dragging her in. Julius had to go again to the court in the Jews' Street about his business ; there was delay about the question and more difficulties had arisen. But Julius was not discouraged ; he showed Hetty a bright round gold coin which he meant to put into the registrar's hand. That would work wonders, Hetty would see. He only ought to have done it three weeks ago and then everything would certainly have been settled by now. Wouldn't he just fancy a monthly income of what the fellow got like this in a year, no doubt more than five hundred thalers, didn't Hetty think? And if that was no good, and if they wouldn't let him start his business, well, all right !—then he would say he was a commission agent ; they couldn't make any difficulties then.

But as they turned the corner the wind met them, blowing in short, fierce gusts down König Street, drinking up the last drops of moisture from walls, window-sills, and side-paths, and even making the great quiet puddles on the road curl and toss in sudden rebellion. Not content with that, it literally tore the words out of Julius's mouth, so that Hetty unfortunately remained in ignorance of her fiancé's latest and most private plans for the future which the wind's unjust



favouritism carried to someone walking behind them, for whose ears they were never intended, whilst all that was left of his speech for Hetty was the movement of his face and hands, which certainly reproduced the rate and intensity of his thoughts and resolves, but kept their actual import shrouded in absolute mystery.

And as Hetty looked down on the little broad, snorting figure at her side, with its red face and self-satisfied, complacent movements, she remembered that she had once walked here with someone to whom she had to raise her head to look, with frank happiness, into his eyes.

At the corner of the Jews' Street Julius said they would see each other again at dinner—he was now a constant guest at the Geyberts, and Aunt Rika was filled with pride when at every meal, smacking his lips and laughing at his own wit, he expressed his approbation by saying that her fare was not only better but cheaper than at Francke's, so he would take a season ticket from then on.

When Julius kissed Hetty's hand and went—talking to himself, as one could see by his movements—past the great black court-house buildings, that strange inexplicable fear which had lain silent for a few moments came over Hetty again with redoubled force.

The wind, too, seemed unwilling that Hetty should go to see Uncle Jason, and sought to dissuade her by every means at its disposal and to prevent her getting on her way, even trying to push her back by force; but Hetty only looked upon its good intentions as ill-will, held the corner of her mantilla before her face and walked on in its very teeth.

At the corner of Kloster Street it made one more effort with all the force of its stormy eloquence, forcing Hetty to stop for a moment to recover breath, but only for a moment, before she rounded the corner, and immediately after stood in the large empty porch with its echoes and uncanny silence. She was kept waiting after ringing at the tall, closed, wooden gate,

with its brown faces and angels' heads, and the time seemed endless as she walked restlessly up and down one of the joins in the dark boarded floor, until little old Fräulein Hortel rattled down the stairs in her great felt shoes to open the door and say Herr Jason Geybert was up already.

Hetty's heart beat so hard in her throat as she climbed the broad white stairs that she would still have liked to go home again, but that was now impossible, and she ought, of course, to be glad to see Uncle Jason again. When, however, Hetty was at the top, everything went black before her eyes, and she had to cling to the balustrade. She had arranged everything that she was going to tell Jason quite calmly beforehand, but now that had all slipped away, and the excitement had robbed her of both thoughts and words.

Then she saw but one thing in the bright green room with its red-brown furniture: in the centre a pale, very thin man with hollow eyes and scanty hair, who might perhaps pass for some unknown, older brother of Uncle Jason's or his sick ghost; a man in a red silk corded dressing-gown with a soft white shirt-collar, where the dressing-gown fell open at his neck; a man who from the settee's green cushions stretched out two trembling hands. All that Hetty had meant to say to Jason was gone in a second, and all she could do was to totter on, fall upon this man and take him in her arms.

"Come," Jason said after a long time—and his voice sounded small and subdued—"come now, dear old Hetty, and sit down here beside me, do. Do you know, I always feel like Dante, who the Milan folk thought had really been to hell. This time, Hetty, it was nearly so far, and I was just on the point of exchanging the sweet habit of existence—as someone who evidently was not well acquainted with it once said—well then, of exchanging this sweet habit for the eternal, unchanging other side of all things. But, made as we are, Hetty, I have lately regretted I did



not manage it. Yet now in these weeks I have often questioned whether that is not, after all, perhaps foolish on my part ; a few days ago, when Uncle Eli brought me the three early Ludwigsburg groups over there—in the front, exactly in the middle—just because I once admired them at his house, that was the first time ; and now, when you come to pay me a visit, is the second.”

As he spoke Jason held Hetty's soft, plump hand with the pink fingers, as round and smooth as if turned on a lathe, between his own that had grown so gaunt and bony, and stroked and fondled it gratefully.

“ But one other thing I learnt in those evil days, and that is what family feeling is. Solomon, Ferdinand and old Eli have been with me all the time, and when I was to have wine each of them had always brought some better than the other. As soon as I am well again I can open a wineshop with the quantity out there. And no sooner was I a little better than great baskets of glasses of jelly and preserves came from Rika and Minnie. I have never been one to set great store by the family, but, in its own way, it means well by one. Well, Hetty, no doubt you notice the same, too, now. Rika, a little time back, described your furniture and trousseau—a princess could not have anything better.”

Jason stopped with a sigh, and Hetty looked at him anxiously, for she was afraid talking had tired him too much. But it was not that, only Jason was overcome by mentioning a thing of which he could not even think without deep sympathy and tearful eyes, but which he must treat with happy equanimity, unless he meant to upset Hetty completely, since he could see well enough that her burden was already as much as she could bear.

“ Yes, yes,” he began again, as Hetty still maintained an embarrassed silence, “ we two are like wandering children that have come back home—and if we consider it carefully, what should we do away

from it? Nowhere else can we find a room heated for us and so nice and warm and comfortable as those at home."

Hetty's eyes were again filled with the tears she had just wiped from their corners. "You may be right there, Uncle."

Jason nodded as if to say, "Only too right, Hetty, only too right," but he did not utter the words aloud, only remarking as he gave her cheek a kindly pat: "Do you know, I had hoped you would come sooner. Now you are going to be married directly, of course you can't spare thoughts for me any more; you have other things in your head, and later on you will have other quite different things again—c'est la vie!"

"It wasn't my doing, Uncle; but Aunt Rika wouldn't hear of it," Hetty answered in self-defence. "As you know, she is so superstitious that she dinned in my ears every day that, as a bride-to-be, I must not visit anyone ill, or else I should have come, for I had plenty of time. Besides, Julius only came back to Berlin ten days ago."

Jason looked straight in front of him. "Yes, yes." And then he added: "Yes, many people are certainly strangely superstitious."

But Hetty did not understand the allusion. "Aunt Rika was against my coming to you to-day, but she couldn't prevent me. Please do come to my wedding, Uncle, if only for an hour; see, the carriage will fetch you and bring you back whenever you wish to go. But when I think that you are not to be there I cannot look forward to anything that day."

Hetty managed to say this pretty well, but not well enough to hide an underlying note from Jason, and this note hurt him.

"You know that, up till now, I have only been out three times for an hour in the midday sun—and even that was too much for me."

"Oh, Uncle, if you can go out like that now, why can you not come to me?" Hetty pleaded.



“ Well, I thought ”—and Jason’s hard-fought friendly calm entirely deserted him—“ I thought, Hetty, you would really rather not have me there.”

“ No, no, Uncle,” Hetty exclaimed with a fresh flow of tears. “ You must come, Uncle ; you know you must come. Do it to please me, so that I shall not be so quite, quite by myself then.”

These words cut Jason to the heart, and taking Hetty’s head in his wasted hands, he drew it down to him.

“ If I can give you pleasure by coming, Hetty, then you know, of course, that I shall not say no.”

“ Won’t you? You won’t desert me, will you, Uncle? ” Hetty’s face was all flushed and wet with tears.

Jason tried to soothe her—she was taking too gloomy a view of it all, and would be quite happy in her marriage. She would have no money worries, and everything would turn out better than she thought. Yet, if she was so against it, why had she said yes? He was sure Solomon had not forced her.

“ No,” Hetty answered, “ I haven’t been forced at all. I did it of my own free will.

“ You see, Uncle, we always fancy something or other has come as a gift to us ; but nothing comes as a free gift to us ; sooner or later, in this life, the bill is put before us. We cannot eat others’ bread anywhere for twenty years without paying, and this was simply the bill that was put into my hand. And since I did not see how I could run up bills in my Uncle’s house, I have paid it now.”

“ No,” said Jason, “ I have my own thoughts about that ; but see, Hetty, wherever you come you bring with you so much intelligence and beauty, and the very groundwork and root of your nature is such a sense of proportion and such a kindly, pure sympathy and understanding, that you will find good everywhere, and this root will always hold firm, untouched by any adverse outer happenings. Just as you have remained quite unchanged at Solomon’s from the hour you came

until now, so you will still remain in your own home."

Hetty shook her head, for she knew herself, best of all, that it was not so; she was just going to answer when she heard voices outside, and the old terror rushed out wildly, glowed and blazed in her heart as in a burning sheaf of straw. Even Jason's face expressed a sudden fright as he jumped up from the couch and wrapped his dressing-gown tightly round him.

"If you wish, Hetty, I'll tell him to go at once."

"I would like to see him once again, Uncle. Has he been back long?" Hetty's voice sounded very firm and calm.

"Some time; he is at the Library now."

Then Kossling stood before them.

It was the same Chance as had led him to Hetty, that time when he was in König Street with Jason, but then Chance had a tight bandage over her eyes. It was the same Chance as, a few weeks later, brought the two together by themselves in König Street and then continued her game out in Charlottenburg; the same Chance as had brought Kossling and Jason together on the Elector's Bridge. By then she had loosened the bandage a little and peeped out under it with secret, stolen glances. But now this Chance had taken off the bandage and showed her true face, a face with stern, iron features and eyes blue as tempered steel. And then her name was Fate. Fate that seizes two human beings and welds them together and drags them by their chains to airy heights and to sorrow's deepest depths, Fate that lifts them up and casts them down, that pushes and kneads, that inspires and crushes. It was Fate here—no longer the blind, fumbling, good-humoured Chance of times gone by, no longer Chance with the stolen glances and scheming smile of later times, but Chance that had with a quick, wild gesture torn off the bandage and stood revealed as Fate, with glances as of tempered steel, silently demanding its fulfilment. . . .



The first to speak was Hetty, apparently quite at her ease, although her voice sounded weary.

"Well, Doctor," she said, stretching out her hand, "it is indeed a long time since we met." She almost added: "And meantime things have not gone well with either of us."

Kossling looked at her with quiet sorrow.

"I was at home again for a long time. You know, I always had a sort of home-sickness for citizenship, and they wanted to have my help in the school management, but then I got news that I could have the post in the Royal Library here. I had applied for it before, but had almost forgotten about it again, so I made haste to come back here. It suits me better, for I have always been half and half a bookworm, and now I'll be one quite."

Hetty looked at him. "Yes, you told me once you could not live except in a large town."

"Oh no, Fräulein Hetty, it is no longer the large town that is the attraction."

Then Jason quickly interposed: "He wanted me so badly," he said, with a smile.

"Yes, Fräulein, I had no idea of all that had meantime happened here."

Hetty dropped her eyes.

"No idea, so I came here very happily to tell your uncle my news; my mind was full of it. My first journey was to this house, where I was told no one was admitted. 'Why not, then?' I ask, quite taken aback. Well, he was a little better again, but no one was allowed to see him yet. And with that they shut the door in my face. Then for a whole week I came to inquire every day until at last I had leave to see and speak to him."

"Well," Jason interrupted with a laugh, for he was anxious to prevent Kossling's saying any more and perhaps getting to those last bad days when Jason had for hours at a time used all his powers of quiet eloquence to keep Kossling from the most extreme measures at least. "Well, my friend, I, for

my part, will still make it all up. But what about the edition of Christian Garve's *Society and Solitude*. Where did it come out? You said you would look it up."

"Yes, and so I did, dear Herr Geybert. It appeared in Breslau, and is certainly to be had quite cheaply now."

"Do you think you could get it for me?"

"Certainly; it is by no means uncommon."

"Oh, I should be so pleased," Jason exclaimed in a louder and more excited tone than the occasion really demanded. Then turning to Hetty, he went on: "Well, I expect you wonder at me, and no doubt think I am like old Cerf of the Theatre Royal, who used to sit at his door with a newspaper upside down, so that passers-by might think he could read."

Hetty had been looking all the time at Kossling, and Jason's remark made her start and laugh, although she had barely heard what he said. Kossling had grown quite silent, too, and sat as if studying each of Hetty's features, to see if he could still find in them what was there before. Jason looked anxiously from one to the other, until he suddenly felt that he had made a great mistake here, and must do his utmost to save what he could from ruin.

"Well, Hetty," he said, "then the next time I see you, you will have the dignity of a young married woman. What's that line of Goethe's? 'And do not always ask papa and mama.' Then, Hetty, once again, because you wish it, and only for that reason, I am coming, even if it's only for an hour; but come I certainly will, my darling! Thank you so much for your visit—you must not think I do not realize, Hetty, that no doubt you have still lots to arrange and pack up these days, and something else to do than to sit here with your old sick uncle."

Hetty had got up. "Then till we meet again, Uncle Jason, and you know why I am so glad!"

"Yes," Jason said almost solemnly, for at this moment he firmly believed he could feel the fate



of two human beings in his hand, two fine threads that were loosely joined, and which he could part again without pulling or tearing, without hurting them or cutting with knife or scissors. "And now do you and Dr. Kossling take each other's hand to say a farewell, free from resentment or grief, like two who have travelled together joyously a little bit of the road and must now go on, one to the right and the other to the left."

But as Kossling flushed red as fire and almost staggered forward, whilst Hetty turned and passed him without a word on her way to the door, apparently at once avoiding and seeking him, Jason Geybert saw that the threads lay, not in his hand, but in another's, a hand that in no way tried to part them, but only twisted and knotted them more firmly together. And, worn out with excitement and talking, Jason fell back on the pillows, pale and with a groan of pain.

Hetty latched the door very quietly behind her, stopped for a moment outside to glance down the covered stairway winding down with its white banisters and slow curves, then went slowly, as though with shackled feet, down the broad steps, stopped to look through a coloured window on to a grey courtyard, went a little farther, still slowly as with shackled feet, stopped once more and looked into the courtyard. She had no feeling at all of what had happened to her—all she felt was the dull thud and hum of her own pulse in her ears. She no longer knew who she was or what had happened to her; knew no longer that she was engaged, that all her things were to go this afternoon into her new home, and that she still had to pack. She still remained standing on the steps with her hand on the banister, lost in wordless thoughts whose meaning she could not have disclosed, but which yet tormented her because they were beyond her control.

When, at last, the high carved door separating the stairway from the entrance hall closed behind her, Hetty stopped once more to think, as if she did not

know where she belonged, and as if she had left something behind that she must fetch. Then she heard once more a rattling on the hall window-pane and leaden frame, a rushing and gurgling in the gutter above, and she thought it was certainly raining again, but would soon leave off. Then she heard steps at the top of the stairs, at the very top, but when she wanted to get out at the door quickly she felt as though her feet were nailed fast to the floor. Then those steps above died away, the rattle and rush stopped too, and Hetty was completely overmastered by those wordless thoughts so utterly beyond her control. Now, however, Kossling stood opposite her with a frightened look on his face.

“You still here, Fräulein Hetty?” Hetty made a gesture that might be interpreted as “How, indeed, could I help it?” and looked at Kossling with tender entreaty in her eyes, whose depths were once more black and velvety, like the petals of dark pansies.

“Have you been waiting here for me, Fräulein Hetty?”

Hetty shook her head. “I don’t know.”

“No, Fräulein Hetty.” Kossling took her hand. “There is no need for you to justify yourself to me, no need for you of all people.”

Hetty shook her head once more.

“What have I been, then, for you, that you should owe me an explanation; what should I be if you, because of this matter, lost one iota of what you have been and always will be for me? Good heavens above, Fräulein, what do you take me for, I wonder, if this were not so?”

Hetty still stood thinking, with her eyes fixed on a couple of loose splinters standing up from the jagged edge of the boards—they assumed a sudden importance for her, these sharp, pointed splinters.

“And just because, to begin with, I never felt any resentment; really, I never did, only pain, it is true.” Kossling hesitated, for he felt that Hetty was not listening. He felt it plainly as Hetty stood there



like someone walking in her sleep, doing nothing but stare at the few loosened splinters, as though compelled to look down at them ; and then, quite suddenly, she spoke in a voice that seemed to come from a distance.

“ What you have been to me ? Is that what you ask ? ”

Kossling again had the same sensation as when, in bygone days, a boy hit him on the head with a leaden bullet. The wall behind him, the white wall, drew back and fell down slowly in a slanting line, and he groped behind his back, with outstretched arms, seeking it in empty space ; the ceiling above came down and the ground at his feet came to meet him.

“ Hetty ! ”

That sounded like some animal's cry in the night, a cry as if he had to awaken all the house. Then Hetty flew to him and almost fell to the ground with him ; then they both tore themselves up again and clung lip to lip, loosened their arms a little as though to look into the other's eyes, once more threw their arms round one another as if never meaning to awake to life again from this embrace. And when Hetty had pressed her lips to Kossling's she drew his head down and kissed his eyes and forehead, whilst her tears poured over his face. But Kossling never ceased repeating the one word he had murmured to himself day and night, and whilst he whispered in her ear, stroked and embraced her, kissed her lips and white temples, Hetty always stammered confusedly midst tears and laughter :

“ I knew it all the time ; I knew it all the time.”

And their love grew ever more ardent, enfolding their embraces as with a hot cloak, whilst outside the wind battered against the door, and the rain drummed on the window-panes. Each time they threw themselves into one another's arms they felt as though they were but one.

At last, however, Kossling, with a sudden pull, tore the door open and the wind blew in with full

force, driving a cold wet shower into their hot faces, whilst outside the water splashed up from the stones, poured with a rush into the gutters, rattled its hundreds of drops into the pools on the roadway, and marked the house-walls with broad wet stripes.

Suddenly it struck Hetty that far down in the distance there was something that belonged to her: a house, people, and a husband she would have to follow. Once more her mind flew back to the words, "we cannot eat others' bread anywhere for twenty years without paying," and she uttered them once more as if half dreaming.

"What is wrong?" Kossling asked in tender anxiety, bending over her.

But Hetty, instead of answering, took his arm.

"Come, Fritz!"

And they both went with laughing faces through the rain up Kloster Street.

"Listen," Hetty began after a pause; "do you understand, Fritz, they handed me the bill. I was twenty years in that house—or was it longer, dearest? Twenty years when we did not know each other; yes, and then, you see, now I must pay for them. And—I have no money left, because I have to give it all to you."

Kossling stopped to look at Hetty anxiously, for he did not understand her meaning.

"My beloved, my sweet one, you must not talk like that," he said.

"Yes, what is to come of it now, Fritz? I tell you, I cudgel my brains but I cannot tell. But something or other will surely happen. Don't you think something will happen? And I could do no other. After I had been there for twenty years, of course I had to pay the bill."

Kossling bent down to kiss her, and the raindrops mingled with the tears on his cheeks. Then, silently and breathing deeply, they crossed a courtyard where the wind lashed the trees, looking, as they passed, into tall windows, behind which great white forms,



groups and horses appeared like spectres until they entered New Friedrich Street, and through the rain Hetty could distinctly hear the clock chiming the hour and reminding her that she must go home.

So they stood in a house-porch clasping each other's hands, neither turning their eyes from the other's face, although their tears well-nigh blinded them. Hetty once more murmured that she had, of course, to pay the bill, and Kossling, knowing now the meaning of her words, said that they would always feel to one another as now, but that in spite of it, he trusted she would be as happy as she had made him, and perhaps life in its course might bring them together again when they had grown pure and calm. Yet every feeling of his heart belied his words. Once more they fell into each other's arms, could not part, whilst kisses fell in benediction on eyes, brow and lips as exchanging vows of fidelity they parted, slowly walked one step away, only to spring together again like iron splinters drawn irresistibly together by some magnetic force.

Then, all at once, Hetty was alone in König Street, and she stepped on, tall, straight and upright, with her head thrown back once more, and the dignified walk that marked all the Geyberts ; that is, she herself did not step on, she knew nothing of it ; something in her moved without any co-operation on her part ; she saw her own walk, strangely enough, somewhat as we always see ourselves in our dreams. The rain had stopped for a time, and the wind was again trying to dry up every drop of moisture—a useless game, since before its accomplishment it took care itself to make its own work of no avail.

Now here was the house and Hetty went in, looked through the glass door into the office, where the book-keepers swayed behind their tall desks like horses at their mangers, and nodded once more, lost in smiling thoughts, to the two white plaster casts, Cupid and Psyche and Bacchus training the young God of Love.

Upstairs her aunt, uncle and Julius were all in

their places at the round table, waiting for her, and the room looked just as usual. Under the blue sofa stood lines and columns of glasses and stone jars, perhaps in even closer array than the spring before ; on the backs of the chairs there still hung the two head-rests, the one adorned with the parrot, the other with the beautiful script which imprinted " Sweet " in reverse characters on Aunt Rika's cheek for the rest of the afternoon ; the little silken dog on the footstool still kept his black bead eyes, and the biscuit-china pictures still swung and gently rattled on their chains in the draught from the wind outside.

Julius greeted Hetty, and Aunt Rika was glad to see her, whilst Uncle Solomon sat there in his little cap with the wreath of oak-leaves worked in chain-stitch.

And Hetty answered ; that is, she herself did not answer, but something answered from her lips, quite fluently and frankly and with a pleasant, friendly calm, whilst she herself only listened in astonishment and wondered at each word she heard.

Then Aunt Rika told her that she had got on really well that morning in the new home, and this strange something, always ready with speech and answer, was interested in it all, and asked how the furniture had been arranged, then listened to a long discussion between Solomon and Julius about the firm, even venturing to give its opinion. Yet all the time Hetty felt that she was sitting there stiff, unmoved, upright—only her cheeks were burning. Then, when dinner was over, this something that still spoke with her lips, still thought and acted for her, gave her uncle a kiss, her aunt a kiss, and even kissed Julius in very quick and careless fashion—a surprise to uncle and aunt, for they were totally unaccustomed to any demonstrations of affection between the two. After this, however, Hetty quickly said she must go to her room to pack, and the maid had better bring her two linen-baskets—that she thought would surely be enough.



But now, when Hetty was once more alone in her room, sitting on the black leather couch with its rows of white buttons, looking at the goggle-eyed goldfish as he splashed in the round bowl with its earthenware stand and shepherdess ; looking, too, at the top of the cabinet where she saw the little gilt openwork basket with the two girls gathering roses that held all her precious keepsakes ; when the setting sun cast a red shimmer over the day's grey light—then that strange something that talked and walked for her had disappeared, and Hetty was again but an oppressed creature, tortured by piercing thoughts, wordless indeed, but beyond her power to control.

The maid came from the back of the house along the covered balcony to bring the linen-baskets, into which Hetty packed all her little white china figures, very carefully lest anything should be broken, and from boxes and cases she took untold quantities of trifles, all kinds of old silver and gold ornaments set with moonstones, amethysts and malachite, as well as chains, bracelets, exercise-books, old school reports, and her few books, each with an inscription in Uncle Jason's running hand. In a little casket at the very top lay the violets, withered and dead between the pencils and miniature, the silver needle-case and the lock of hair. With the tips of her fingers Hetty carefully collected them, and taking an envelope from the new box of stationery that her uncle had brought from Karlsbad—a false prophet he had proved, for she had not written on a single sheet—she put into it the faded blossoms, still tinted with blue, and put them on the top of the cabinet.

Before long Gustav and the new porter came up, and telling Hetty that she need have no fear, for they would treat her things as though they were new-laid eggs, they lifted the baskets in their great toil-worn hands with such tender care that not even the china ventured to make itself heard.

Yet when Hetty was once more alone in the half-dark room that strange something, that worked, gave

directions, talked for her, had disappeared again, and there Hetty sat with folded hands on one of the white chairs looking through the glass panes of the empty cabinet at the last rays of parting day. She had meant to think of Kossling, but, curiously enough, she did not in the least know what he looked like, whether she loved him, whether this other was right or wrong. She was entirely under the dominance of those worrying thoughts that really led nowhere, and she had a curious feeling that she must look at everything here once more because she would never see it again.

Was it, then, her room still? Everything stood bare and empty, cupboards and cases with a strange hollow look about them; not even her album lay on the rep tablecloth; all that was left of her belongings was the little envelope of dead violets and the goldfish here splashing round his glass bowl in the half-dark room. And even the goldfish was to be taken over the next day. All that she had lived through here had now shrunk into a few memories. But then those silent piercing thoughts came back again, and Hetty never even noticed how darkness fell around her, broken only by a single reflected ray of light on the glass bowl in front of her, until suddenly she heard the sound of the bell and its tinkle, tinkle, followed by Ferdinand's voice and Janey's, mingled with another that she thought must be old Naphthali's, and by Rosalie's and Flossie's laugh and whispers in the passage. Then she got up, crossed the balcony, where the wet walnut-boughs rustled against her gown, and after she had seen that all was right in the kitchen, went on to join the noisy talking company.

All evening that strange something which she heard and saw in amazement, yes, really saw as we see ourselves in our dreams, spoke with her lips. It asked questions, chatted, answered, ate, drank, clinked glasses with Julius, Uncle Naphthali, and with all and sundry, gave a sisterly kiss to Flossie and Rosalie, submitted to a few of Ferdinand's jokes, which were



undeniably not in the best of taste—to the giggling delight of Flossie and Rosalie—even laughed as Naphthali, to end up with, when Solomon sent for two more bottles, got up and said: “Why should I drink this heavy wine so late at night? I’m going to the inn.” Yes, laughed at this remark, which doubtless was stronger from a dietetic than from a grammatical point of view.

Very soon, however, Hetty was once more alone, and the gnawing, hammering, buzzing began again; there she lay with open eyes fixed on the dusky folds of the bed-hangings that still held a glimmer of light, though where it came from no tongue could tell. Every moment she felt sure that something must happen—what she neither knew nor dreamt—but she was firmly convinced that come it would. And what seemed stranger than all else to her was that she could not think of Kossling at all; in spite of all her efforts, her attempts to call up his picture before her mind, everything still remained vain and empty; all she felt was but that gnawing oppression, those inarticulate thoughts all tending to one point. And if she really dropped asleep for a short time it was only to dream again of the great red spider with crawling legs, that very slowly let itself down from a ceiling heavens high, getting bigger and bigger, quicker and quicker, until at last it hung exactly over Hetty, hung for a moment so motionless that she could see every joint of the long, pliable feet, every ring on its blood-red body, every bend of its quivering feelers, before this wild greedy dream-phantom fell with the full force of its body on to her, and Hetty started up in horror, her hands grasping the empty air.

At last, with tardy steps, a grey day crept up with its wind-tossed clouds behind the close bare branches of the walnut-tree. But no glitter of the china in the glass cupboard responded to the first ray of dawn, and even under her down-quilt Hetty shivered at this unfamiliar emptiness. Aunt Rika gave an early knock

at her door, for there was much to be done, and Hetty must go over at once with her into the new flat. As they all sat together as usual over their morning coffee, Hetty, Aunt Rika and Uncle Solomon, that something which spoke for Hetty talked here too ; but yet Hetty felt every moment how strange her uncle's manner was to her, as if, so it seemed to her, he was only sitting waiting for her to speak to him ; at the very last second indeed, when she came in again with her new cloak and wide hood, Hetty fancied he motioned to her with his eyes, as though entreating her to speak her mind, but before this had quite penetrated her consciousness she was already out with her aunt down the street in the wind and rain.

Then came the unpacking and arranging the things in the cupboards—royal china, every piece with its painted group of flowers and its inscription “ your welfare,” and Rhenish pottery with dark-blue birds and tendrils for everyday use. Then she had to hang up her dresses, and every creak of the wardrobe bolts went through Hetty like a sharp knife. Julius also joined them, but Aunt Rika told him he was no use here, only in the way, although if he would go to the confectioner, Candieni's, and tell him he must kindly send the first order at nine o'clock, but the second was not wanted before two, then he would at least prove that he was not a useless cumberer of the ground.

As Hetty walked homewards again she tried to recall how her new home looked, but that picture, too, was effaced and gone. Dinner came and went, and the other Hetty talked of ordinary matters quite frankly and easily, whilst she herself sat there waiting in silence for what the next second must surely bring, oppressed and struggling meantime with those dull, undefined, inarticulate thoughts of hers.

In the afternoon, however, it so happened that Hetty was quite alone ; her uncle was in the office, her aunt away arranging the new kitchen ; Julius had gone to Steheli's with Naphthali, who wanted to see how



things went there, and Flossie and Rosalie were in any case more often at Janey's than here. Then—when she was alone—Hetty went, as in a dream, once more through all the rooms, sat some time on the high chair in the dining-room, looked at the engravings on the wall, the bright things on the sideboard, all the pieces of work, cushions, head-rests, covers familiar to her in every stitch and the biscuit-china pictures at the windows, again gently swaying on their chains, “Morning Greeting” and “Evening Prayer,” “The Warrior and His Son” and “The Negro's Bath,” which Uncle Solomon said made very good pairs. Hetty caressed them all with tearful glances—she did not know why, for, as she tried to convince herself, she could come here again in two days' time.

Next Hetty went into the green drawing-room ; as once before, she had to push open the wooden shutters when the grey afternoon suddenly called forth all the high lights of the white pieces of furniture with their golden swan-necks ; only the green silk walls looked a little paler than before. But all Hetty's trousseau, the dresses that had hung from the chandelier arms, the linen that had lain on the tables, the rows of shoes on the polished floor, the hoods and shady hats, the mantles and little caps—all this had left not a scrap of paper-wrapping, not an end of twine even to bear it witness, and had it not been for the aroma of clean linen the room might well seem to have entirely forgotten Hetty already. All was in its accustomed order : here by the high mirrors stood the moustached Turk, guarding the tiny little ticking clock, and over there the bronze Cupid was still sharpening his arrow ; the candles were again bowed like trees after a hurricane, and not a painted cup or silver sugar-tongs was missing from the cabinets. Everything stood untouched in its place ; there was the flower-table with the india-rubber plant and the palm, and there the square piano. As Hetty looked at it all with sorrowful curiosity it suddenly struck her that Kossling had been the last to play on those notes, which no one had struck since

then. Her tears began to flow, and she sank on her knees before the piano, touching again and again the black and white keys with her forehead and burning lips until the broken chords at her gentle touch re-echoed in glassy, ghostly tones through the silent room. All that evening flashed before her mind, and she saw everything as it then was ;—here Eli had sat with her aunts, there they had played at cards, over there in that white niche she had stood with Kossling, until the aunts, with their unmistakable glances, had asked her what she meant by it. As Hetty's tears flowed now they washed away that sense of numbness which had stupefied her, and she saw all the loveless misery lying before her, and shrank in utter horror at the sight.

Then the rest came back, and once more the fight closed round her, until Hetty felt like nothing but a marionette, like the doll in *Hinkel, Gockel and Gackeleia*, which was no doll, but a beautiful work of art that walked and talked, and at last buzzed away.

In the evening her aunt dismissed them all very soon, for the morrow would be a trying day ; her household, too, she drove early to bed, and dinned into Uncle's ears how anxious she was that he should be careful next day with his eating and drinking, since he knew what the doctor had said. And Aunt Rika kissed Hetty and Uncle Solomon, and both said they hoped she would never be worse off than she had been with them ; indeed, she had their heartiest wishes for something better, and to secure this they had really and truly done the utmost that lay in their power.

Perhaps a little self-approval peeped out of this speech, but I would like to find the man who would not have praised himself aloud in like case, and would not have believed he was the personification of love and goodness. For as soon as we have modestly or richly endowed another with a portion of our worldly goods we are firmly convinced of our total absolution from any other duty with regard to him.



Now the last night which Hetty so dreaded had come. She no longer had the goldfish who had at least splashed sometimes in his bowl until yesterday. Gustav, the porter, had already taken him over to the new home. He had promised to care for him as a child of his own, and at parting—because for the first few days no one would remember him—he had scattered such a handful of food and gum wafers on the water that the poor creature was well-nigh suffocated.

Hetty lay there in her room with the envelope of faded violets as her only possession, and all seemed as strange and uncomfortable as it could be in any hotel room that is seen for the first time and will be left again at break of day. In vain did she try to collect her thoughts ; all she could do was to lie there in silent, ceaseless brooding. She felt as though something was getting ready within her—as if, at last, she must come to some conclusion ; she fancied her feelings could not be unlike those of some captive tightly bound in chains, who in silent misery strains every muscle to break his bonds. Once, when she was a child, she had seen a man carried off like that, and the vision of this man, which she had never seen before except in some nightmare, lived again before her mind. Then, however, Hetty fell into a sound and dreamless sleep, not light and broken as before, but where she lay in deep weary faintness of spirit and heavy as a log. . . .

When Hetty awoke she looked with a feeling of stupefaction out on to the grey day and the shower of rain, bending down the bare boughs of the walnut-tree before her window, and saw everything as through a gauze veil. It was some time, indeed, before she recalled to mind that this was the morning of her wedding-day. But then the conviction again overpowered her that it was, after all, impossible, and that something would surely happen. It could not be true—something must prevent it.

As she still lay like this with her eyes fixed on

the folds of the canopy above the bed, and her thoughts wandering aimlessly hither and thither—just as a shipwrecked mariner scans the horizon for the mast-head he so ardently desires—she heard a knocking, a continuous knocking. But she paid no heed, and all at once there stood Jenny beside Hetty's bed in a white muslin frock with a little wreath of rosebuds on her hair, and asked her to come and see a surprise waiting for her.

Hetty got up rubbing her eyes, but this dull numb feeling that gave such a far-away feeling to everything did not disappear, and that silent, aimless brooding still held her in its grasp. All day long she looked at everything around her with wondering eyes, now and again even losing sight of it altogether; at other times it came rolling up so close to her that she saw every image with unnatural clearness of vision. And she heard every word uttered near her as clearly as if it had been shouted through a speaking-trumpet.

Hetty dressed quickly, for she heard knocking again. Then she went to the cabinet for her gold locket, which she always wore on a little chain round her neck, put in it a couple of the faded violets and let it fall once more into its hiding-place on her bosom. This done, Hetty went out into the rain on to the balcony, leant far over the railing, and rubbing each flower to atoms in her fingers, she dropped the rest of the dead violets slowly on the courtyard below. When she had finished she drew a sigh of relief, and felt that the last tie that bound her to this house was now torn asunder.

The green front room was already full of people, her uncle in full dress and her aunt in her silver-grey satin. Julius was wearing a new blue coat with shining gilt buttons that had been made by Jason's tailor. Ferdinand was there as well as Naphthali and Eli. Wolfgang was sitting sadly in a corner, and Jenny in her little white muslin frock was nervously standing, first on one foot, then on the other. Minnie and Janey held lace handkerchiefs that they surrep-



titiously put up to their eyes now and again, whilst Julius looked very solemn with a leather case under his arm, not unlike a little violoncello. Hetty wondered what these people were doing here, and smiled at the comical gathering. But then Janey threw herself in all her breadth on Hetty as she sobbed her good wish on her wedding-day that she might be happier than she had been herself with her Ferdinand.

Then it flashed upon Hetty that the fat little man over there in the blue coat would be her husband ever after to-day. Then it disappeared again, and was followed by a sense of wonder. She said something, but although on the preceding days she had always plainly heard what came from her lips, now she was no longer conscious of what it was. But then she was standing beside Julius with all the others facing her—stiff and motionless. And she saw Jenny in front of her, in both hands balancing a white cushion, on which lay a green wreath covered with a narrow lace veil, and Jenny, looking very nervous, recited :

“ This morn the sun’s rays shone so gold  
As ne’er was seen in days of old.”

Yet Hetty thought that in spite of that the rain had come down in torrents. Then they all kissed Jenny and told her she had done her part very well, whilst Naphthali put his hand on her head and asked : “ How old are you, my child ? ” So Hetty concluded that Jenny had finished now, and expressed her thanks. Julius, however, taking the leather case that struck Hetty as so like a little violoncello, gave it to her, and as Hetty opened it she saw before her eyes a shimmer of red and gold. Those were aquamarines and topazes, he said, and she must put on the necklace afterwards as her bridal adornment ; like a queen she would look, and a queen she was, queen of his heart.

But Solomon stepped forward now with a leather case that he dug out of his coat-pocket from under

his handkerchief and handed to Julius, telling him he needn't wear the watch every day, or it might be stolen, and it was too good for that. The watch came out of his father's business ; it had once been ordered by a prince, but as he didn't pay, it had been kept back as a precautionary measure.

Then they went in to breakfast at a long table on which wine stood already. And they had not finished eating when the book-keepers and store clerks came up from the office to offer congratulations and to receive their glasses of wine. And more and more came whilst Hetty stood beside Julius with his short hard fingers tightly clutching her white hand, her brain filled with anxious brooding. She remembered the tale of a Spanish queen whose corpse was set on the throne and received her courtiers' homage. That was how it was with her, she thought. What was that queen's name now? If only Jason would come—he could tell her, no doubt. But then Hetty thanked again, bowed and laughed until all disappeared once more, and nothing was left but that dull oppression and the wordless fear that something must happen now, and that no one knew what it might be.

Now Julius, however, had suddenly disappeared, and Naphthali asked Hetty where he was. She did not know, but Ferdinand, who was somewhat excited—for his head could not stand any wine in the morning—made a gesture of counting money and flourished his hand till his fingers cracked :

“ Now they're counting like Fetschow's bank messenger ; totals not known but accounts tally so far.”

“ Excuse me,” Naphthali inquired, “ what dowry is your brother giving? ”

Then, once more, everything sank for Hetty into a muffled buzz, and she was standing in her room that was no longer hers, whilst Flossie and Rosalie were fussing round her, stroking with admiration the rustling corded silk until Hetty's hair almost stood on end.

They brushed Hetty's evening cloak with the great



hood as well, for she must slip it on over her dress for fear of catching cold in the clear air that plainly foretold a frosty night.

Then Julius came in, in a very serious and festive mood, with a myrtle buttonhole in his new frock-coat, and Hetty asked where her uncle and aunt were ; for she wanted to tell them she could not pay the bill now after all—no, she could not. But the maid told her that Herr and Frau Geybert had driven away half an hour ago, and Julius added that they must be there first, because they were giving the wedding-feast, that was always done.

As Hetty went out of the door she felt as if she must cling to the white door-posts and scream,—scream,—keep on screaming. . . . But then everything slipped away again, and all she felt on the half-dark stairs was Julius close at her side. She walked across the entrance porch on thick red strips of carpet and looked, as in a dream, once more at the two plaster casts of Cupid and Psyche and Bacchus training the young God of Love ; then came a double row of heads, and she heard someone say : “ Just look at the little bridegroom ; ” the maid, who could not speak for tears, handed the cloak to her in the carriage, whilst Julius took her hand. For a moment Hetty saw, across the boats, the castle-buildings standing high and dark against a blue sky, over which a few white clouds were racing before the wind, but in a moment she was walking over red strips again with Julius, carrying the cloak that she must put on again directly after. And the two were left alone for a few seconds in a small room by the stairs, when Julius kissed Hetty, exclaiming that he was so happy, and was sure of his business too. He began to arrange his necktie before a small looking-glass, and again Hetty had to laugh. But immediately after she saw herself in a large room, surrounded by a crowd of people shifting and changing places like the bright fragments of glass in a kaleidoscope. All of them—yes, every one—pushed their way up to her to con-

gratulate and kiss her, and old Eli said to her—she heard it quite distinctly—“Now put a good face on it!” But as Hetty thanked him—for the jeweller had already sent Eli’s presents to Solomon—Eli did not quite understand, as it was one of his deaf times to-day; at last, however, he made out what it was all about. “Now, Hetty,” he said, shaking his head so indignantly that the powder rose in a cloud, “I am glad that you like it, anyway. I always prefer to give with an open hand rather than with a tight fist, and especially to you, my child; . . . unfortunately, that is, after all, all I can do.”

Ferdinand, who had been somewhat excited from the first, patted Hetty’s neck as he patted his horses, and exclaimed: “Lass, hold up your head, or else you are the very image of Queen Esther.”

And again in Hetty’s brain the gay glass fragments fell into the strangest patterns, but she herself was sitting in the very midst of a pattern of these gay fragments; the toques with the marabout plumes on tall figures, the light little caps with lilac blossom, the little wreaths and lace puffs waved to and fro round her, like the golden stalks of a cornfield, bending before the wind. Julius came up to her, and she stood alone with him between the four poles of a canopy above them; behind her she could hear whispers, and in front of her stood a man in a black coat and white collar, raising both arms heavenwards, who suddenly roared with the voice of a hungry lion: “The ring is r-r-round, r-r-round is the ring . . . an emblem of God without beginning and without end.” And Hetty was so frightened that her knees nearly gave way. But once again everything disappeared, and only appeared again by slow, indistinct stages, until Hetty began to have a glimmering consciousness of where she was. The man was still speaking, but although Hetty tried to listen, she could make no sense of it, yet she heard again quite plainly: “Yes, it was not in vain that his parents, with wise forethought, gave him the name of Solomon, who was,



as the Scriptures tell us, the wisest among mortals." Hetty pondered and pondered as to who could be meant. The man, however, had got farther by now, and was speaking to her—that man who breathed so unpleasantly in her face: "And you, beloved bride, now leave the dear dwelling of your loved ones to enter the dear dwelling of your beloved husband." How Hetty longed to scream that it was not true, and that she would never do it, but then something flashed before her eyes, she was asked a question, and something answered with her lips, she felt a touch upon her hand, and there arose an uproar behind as of the tramp of a hundred horses, whilst fifty lips were pressed on hers, soft and hard, young and dewy, harsh and dry. Aunt Janey melted as if made of wax, and little Aunt Minnie, looking like a comet with her long train, sobbed herself even smaller as she exclaimed again and again that it was too touching. Uncle Jason's face appeared in all the confusion, and Hetty heard how he called to her above the intervening heads: "Now then, is it all well over? For I have only just come, Frau Jacoby—you know it is against my principles to look on at such ceremonies."

Then Hetty felt Julius take her arm, whilst Philippi played "du du da, di di, du, da, daa," and Hetty tried to think what tune it was, as if she had never heard Mendelssohn's "Wedding March" before. The folding doors opened—there in the hall, with the many tall mirrors on the wall, reflecting and reflecting the rays of light, stood a long table, and she was led by Julius right away to the end, where the lofty bridecake stood in its glory adorned with a pink sugar Cupid. And the old hired man Pieper, who had known Hetty from a tiny child, wished her happiness and put a cup of broth before her. She lifted it to her lips; but it tasted like poison, and her throat refused to swallow. She sat motionless, looking down the table. All mouths were busy, and she caught sight of herself in the mirror behind the tiered cake, and the reflection of her topaz and aquamarine necklace hurt

her eyes. In the mirror, too, she caught sight of the table in tenfold reflection, endless rows of people, smacking their lips, before the boring, hammering and inarticulate brooding began in her once more and dulled all her impressions. And Julius said: "Do eat, my darling," as he threw on her plate three little bent fish that stared at Hetty with their uncanny, blind eyes like great, grey hailstones. She heard a sharp tap on a glass, saw Jason's tall thin figure bending a little forward, and heard his dear refined voice at once soft and penetrating. Now she really must pay attention, Hetty said to herself, but her ears so buzzed and hummed that she scarcely heard a word, except one sentence: "That he was left dead on the field was the result of a change of identity; the bullet must, so to speak, have borne his name;" and as Jason sat down again, everything was quiet and motionless, for no one uttered a sound. Then Minnie called out to Hetty: "Now, Hetty, did you hear what sort of man your father was?—But how Jason can speak."

But now Wolfgang and Jenny came up to lay in front of Hetty and Julius two long satin ribbons with gold fringes, inscribed with verses. Hetty kissed Wolfgang, whose face was quite green and tear-stained. The band, however, struck up: "Oh, what do we need to be happy and gay?" and played through ten verses.

Dishes of capon and chicken were handed round, whilst Ferdinand sat there with a flaming face already, crumbling up his roll. Eli, however, who happened to have one of his deaf days, tapped on his glass, and you could have heard a pin drop in the silence that followed. Eli himself had either caught the shrill reverberation of the glass or noticed that the noise and voices died down round about him, although he had only wanted to attract his neighbour's attention.

"You up there," he said with great annoyance to Naphthali, "just tell Pieper to bring me some more gravy."



Good heavens ! What a peal of laughter, quite drowning the last effects of Jason's words and introducing noisy merriment from one end of the hall to the other. Every fresh peal of laughter went like a knife through Hetty's brain. Then at last Ferdinand rose to his feet to speak, and on such occasions he always shone. They all came up to Hetty, giggling and clinking glasses with her, and, once more, she got a satin ribbon—Jenny gave it this time—inscribed with a poem of Flossie's and Rosalie's. And the company sang its eight verses to the air of "The Loving Cup," but Flossie and Rosalie told Hetty it was their own composition.

Now Naphthali rose to his feet, and Hetty bit her lips in her effort to hear what he said, but his voice only came to her as from afar :

"I had always heard," Naphthali slowly began, turning towards Hetty, "so much of the bride's beauty and charm, but I hadn't believed it. Yet, when I came here, I thought like the rest. The honoured speaker before me told us he had known his Hetty from her birth. Well, I have known our Joel more years than that, for I held him on my lap when he was marked with the sign of the Jewish faith. I was . . ."

Hetty saw Uncle Solomon push his chair back angrily, as if he meant to jump up, but, at the same moment, everything faded away and the boring sensation began again. Julius filled her glass with champagne with the remark that on such a day as this she must drink champagne, and as he spoke she felt through her thin silk dress that heavy, fat, stumpy hand—as if the tips had been chopped off all the fingers—felt it on her knees—felt it with such aversion and such sudden disgust that she was overcome with actual physical nausea.

From this moment she cast stolen nervous glances at this short, broad man sitting at her side, as if hammered down on his chair, smacking, stuffing and throwing great pieces and masses of food on her plate, ladling out whole mountains of asparagus and

peas with the injunction: "Do take some, Hetty, and eat it!"

Fresh streams of people came pouring up to clink glasses with Hetty, who felt as though she had never seen one of the faces before; now and then came the report of some of the crackers the guests were pulling with anxiously averted faces, and at every such report Hetty felt as if a bullet flew humming and whizzing past her temples. The noise grew louder every moment as everyone talked, screamed, laughed all at once round Hetty, sitting there bolt upright and motionless as a rock amidst the tossing surf; she had now reached a state of entire stupefaction, with but the one feeling that there was no longer even the slightest tie of union between her and those others, that her past life's account had been entered in another book; then, too, always this boring sensation, this continual anxious thinking, this straining of all her muscles against the chains that bound her every limb, bound them so tightly that not one could stir. Ices came round, but when Hetty took some, it seared her throat like molten iron. She saw the children going along the table pilfering and putting into a paper bag all the delicacies left, and Aunt Rika gave her a similar bag, too, to take home with her for the evening, and told her she would get the bride-cake as well.

But Julius, with a very red face, replied: "Well, if we can't manage it to-day—we'll just eat it to-morrow—shan't we, Hetty?"

Aunt Rika laughed as she struck at him with her fan. But Hetty's heart was filled with such terror that once more everything disappeared. She felt like a bird fluttering in a cage, beating head and wings against the bars in its helpless terror of the hand stretched out to grasp it.

At last Solomon's voice was heard above the tumult: "I wish my honoured guests a good digestion. Coffee we will drink, please, in the yellow drawing-room."



And his pride in this rhetorical performance was quite evident to all.

Once more there was a noise like a hundred horses' hoofs, as all the guests ran this way and that, shaking hands and offering congratulations and kisses as if some miracle had happened.

Julius sang and hummed without ceasing as Hetty walked with him into the yellow room, where everyone was already crowding round the buffet to assure Madame Spiro, with her kindly face and little white cap, that the dinner had been, as usual, truly magnificent.

Soon Hetty and Julius were passing along the rows of yellow upholstered seats, so that everyone might get a few special words from them. Something still spoke independently with Hetty's lips, to which she listened sometimes in fixed astonishment. She looked round for Jason, but he had long since gone again, and Hetty was left quite alone now to face her enemies.

Naphthali detained her. "Well, Joel, he exclaimed, how do you feel?"

Julius laughed.

"Well, I suppose you are happy enough now, Joel. Do you know, I said to myself, 'The journey costs enough, anyway, without giving a big present as well.' But one thing your old uncle does wish you: that you may always have a gold coin more than you need."

Then up came Ferdinand, who had not really been sober since the morning.

"Well, old fellow," he shouted from a distance, "how do you feel to-day? This just suits you, eh? I wish I was as young as you once again."

Hetty dropped her bridegroom's arm as, once more, she felt like the bird before a pursuing hand, as if she must beat her head against the walls and, blind and mad, find some way of escape.

Right away at the back sat the little old lady with the tight curls, and actually her needlework, which she

was twisting and turning. "Now, Hetty," she exclaimed, "do come here. What a pity it isn't summer, then we could take a little stroll down the garden."

But, as she spoke, Hetty noticed that the door of the little room where her cloak was, stood ajar, and her heart flew at such a rate that she could see nothing but bright stars before her eyes, and then she turned icy cold.

"Yes, it is a pity; I should like it better, too," she answered. "But just a minute . . ."

Hetty took the one step into the room, saw her cloak, tottered, fell on to a chair, tore herself up, swayed a second time, and a second time tore herself up, threw her cloak over her shoulders, and very slowly, inch by inch, peeped through the crack of the door out on to the stairs. No one there; no, no one! Her shoulders followed her head, then came one foot—then the other—gently on the tips of her toes; and now she was hurrying down in the satin shoes, very fast, tripping along without a sound, whilst she saw everything around her, the iron banisters of the covered stairway, and the carpet strips on the steps, with a strange keenness of perception, the noise above reverberating in her ears, even through her cloth hood.

Next, however, the door will not open—will not open. Gracious Heaven, what now! what now? Ah, there it comes! And a wave of cold darkness breaks on Hetty's face.

She stops for a moment with panting breath. No one has followed her, not a soul—only the clear night surrounds her with thousands of cold, twinkling stars on the dark heavens above. Hetty races across the roadway, right through the frozen puddles, where the thin ice cracks and breaks beneath her feet until, with her white shoes, she is ankle-deep in water. She grasps the train of her dress, drags it round her feet and runs and runs towards the lights, towards König Street, without meeting a single person. She pauses, listens, turns her head; no, not a sound, not a foot-



fall, not a human voice—everything wrapped in silent darkness.

All Hetty's oppression and numbness has left her; she is indeed still excited, hot and feverish, but quite clear-headed and firm-willed again. And on her bosom she can plainly feel her locket.

\* \* \* \* \*

And here, my reader and friend—for I hope you are my friend by now—here, then, ends the story of Hetty Geybert;—and, at the very beginning, I only promised to tell of her. But the other story left for me to tell, the story of poor Henrietta Jacoby, I will keep until my restless, torn life finds again seasons of refreshment, in whose quiet hours I shall once more have visions of those dear shades.

Till then, however, we will grant their former rest to all those who have led us so far with active steps: to Solomon and his spouse, adorned with many virtues; to Jason, buried, as he had lived, a little apart from the others; to Ferdinand and little Wolfgang, who crept shyly away before he had developed any understanding of the wonderfully delicate mechanism of the Greek language, leaving no gap behind him, not even in his class, for none of his schoolfellows had to move up even one place when it was known that Wolfgang would stay permanently and for ever away from school; to Eli and Minnie, whose life soon came to an end, and who were buried almost at the same time—for the worthy Minnie could not bear life's heavy burden alone—to them, too, we will grant their wonted rest. The old heathen, indeed, when he reaches his heathen paradise will perhaps—as I suppose, although, alas, we have no exact knowledge of these things—the old heathen will, no doubt, stand every day at twelve o'clock at the corner, with the top-hat worn in his day, and his bamboo cane, and subject the sun god's steeds to criticism as condemnatory as he used to pronounce on Nagler's geldings between the shafts of the Prenzlau coach. And why should we deny rest to her whose name this story bears, the rest

for which she struggled and which she won by a year of hard experience? For, as regards her marriage, things did not come out quite smoothly at last, and on the gravestone that her uncle put up for her Hetty is remembered only as a niece, not as a wife. Yet even this last token of affection is now mouldering away, and wind and weather, rain and snow, have long since washed and rubbed the last vestige of gilt from the letters and flourishes, have almost erased and made them well-nigh illegible ; they are faded and obliterated just as Hetty Geybert's memory is obliterated from the minds of men. But, later on, in some quiet hour, I will put fresh gold over the curves and flourishes of her life's lettering, so that it may shine bright and legible from afar to every eye. Moreover, for him, who was sucked down into the whirlpool, who rests within the bounds of no churchyard, to whose memory no stone has ever been erected, for him, too, I will, at the same time, gild the runic characters of his life's history and make plain to my readers the forgotten secrets which now lie hidden from every eye.



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